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THE COMPLETE WORKS  
OF WILLIAM HAZLITT IN  
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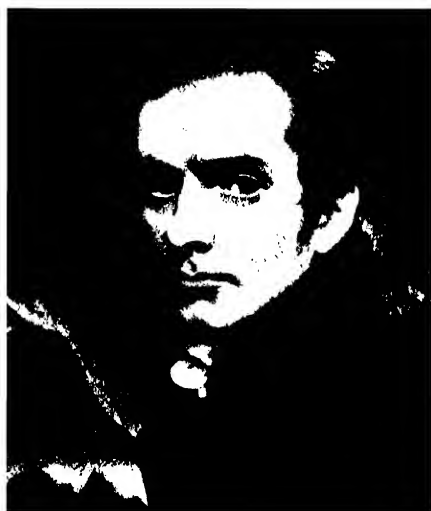
*CENTENARY EDITION*

*Edited by*  
*P. P. HOVE*

VOLUME EIGHTEEN •

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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF  
WILLIAM HAZLITT

EDITED BY P. P. HOWE

AFTER THE EDITION OF  
A. R. WALLER AND ARNOLD GLOVER



VOLUME EIGHTEEN

Art and  
Dramatic  
Criticism



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LONDON AND TORONTO

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT THE  
CHAUCER PRESS, BUNGAY, SUFFOLK

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# ART CRITICISM

VOL. XVIII. : B



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# ART CRITICISM

## FRAGMENTS ON ART. WHY THE ARTS ARE NOT PROGRESSIVE?

### I.

*The Morning Chronicle.*

*January 11, 1814.*

It is often made a subject of complaint and surprise, that the arts in this country, and in modern times, have not kept pace with the general progress of society and civilisation in other respects, and it has been proposed to remedy the deficiency by more carefully availing ourselves of the advantages which time and circumstances have placed within our reach, but which we have hitherto neglected, the study of the antique, the formation of academies, and the distribution of prizes.

First, the complaint itself, that the arts do not attain that progressive degree of perfection which might reasonably be expected from them, proceeds on a false notion, for the analogy appealed to in support of the regular advances of art to higher degrees of excellence, totally fails; it applies to science, not to art. Secondly, the expedients proposed to remedy the evil by adventitious means are only calculated to confirm it. The arts hold immediate communication with nature, and are only derived from that source. When that original impulse no longer exists, when the inspiration of genius is fled, all the attempts to recal it are no better than the tricks of galvanism to restore the dead to life. The arts may be said to resemble Antæus in his struggle with Hercules, who was strangled when he was raised above the ground, and only revived and recovered his strength when he touched his mother earth.

Nothing is more contrary to the fact than the supposition that in what we understand by the *fine arts*, as painting and poetry, relative perfection is only the result of repeated efforts, and that what has been once well done constantly leads to something better. What is mechanical, reducible to rule, or capable of demonstration, is progressive, and admits of gradual improvement: what is not mechanical or definite, but depends on genius, taste, and feeling, very soon

## WHY THE ARTS

becomes stationary or retrograde, and loses more than it gains by transfusion. The contrary opinion is, indeed, a common error, which has grown up, like many others, from transferring an analogy of one kind to something quite distinct, without thinking of the difference in the nature of the things, or attending to the difference of the results. For most persons, finding what wonderful advances have been made in biblical criticism, in chemistry, in mechanics, in geometry, astronomy, &c.—*i.e.* in things depending on mere inquiry and experiment, or on absolute demonstration—have been led hastily to conclude, that there was a general tendency in the efforts of the human intellect to improve by repetition, and in all other arts and institutions to grow perfect and mature by time. We look back upon the theological creed of our ancestors, and their discoveries in natural philosophy, with a smile of pity; science, and the arts connected with it, have all had their infancy, their youth, and manhood, and seem to have in them no principle of limitation or decay; and, inquiring no farther about the matter, we infer, in the height of our self-congratulation, and in the intoxication of our pride, that the same progress has been, and will continue to be, made in all other things which are the work of man. The fact, however, stares us so plainly in the face, that one would think the smallest reflection must suggest the truth, and overturn our sanguine theories. The greatest poets, the ablest orators, the best painters, and the finest sculptors that the world ever saw, appeared soon after the birth of these arts, and lived in a state of society which was, in other respects, comparatively barbarous. Those arts, which depend on individual genius and incommunicable power, have always leaped at once from infancy to manhood, from the first rude dawn of invention to their meridian height and dazzling lustre, and have in general declined ever after. This is the peculiar distinction and privilege of each, of science and of art; of the one, never to attain its utmost summit of perfection, and of the other, to arrive at it almost at once. Homer, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, Dante, and Ariosto (Milton alone was of a later age, and not the worse for it), Raphael, Titian, Michael Angelo, Correggio, Cervantes, and Boccaccio—all lived near the beginning of their arts—perfected, and all but created them. These giant sons of genius stand, indeed, upon the earth, but they tower above their fellows, and the long line of their successors does not interpose any thing to obstruct their view, or lessen their brightness. In strength and stature they are unrivalled, in grace and beauty they have never been surpassed. In after-ages, and more refined periods (as they are called), great men have arisen one by one, as it were by throes and at intervals: though in general the best of these cultivated and artificial minds were of an inferior order, as Tasso and Pope

## ARE NOT PROGRESSIVE?

among poets, Claude Lorraine<sup>1</sup> and Vandyke among painters. But in the earliest stages of the arts, when the first mechanical difficulties had been got over, and the language as it were acquired, they rose by clusters and in constellations, never to rise again.

### FRAGMENTS ON ART. WHY THE ARTS ARE NOT PROGRESSIVE?

#### II.

*The Morning Chronicle.*

*January 15, 1814.*

SCIENCE and the mechanic arts depend not on the force with which the mind itself is endued, or with which it contemplates given things (for this is naturally much the same), but on the number of things, successively perceived by the same or different persons, and formally arranged and registered in books or memory, which admits of being

<sup>1</sup> In speaking thus of Claude, we yield rather to common opinion than to our own. However inferior the style of his best landscapes may be, there is something in the execution that redeems all defects. In taste and grace nothing can ever go beyond them. He might be called, if not the perfect, the faultless painter. Sir Joshua Reynolds used to say, that there would be another Raphael, before there was another Claude. In Mr. Northcote's *Dream of a Painter* (see his *Memoirs of Sir Joshua Reynolds*) there is an account of Claude Lorraine, so full of feeling, so picturesque, so truly classical, so like Claude, that we cannot resist this opportunity of copying it out.

'Now tired with pomp and splendid shew, the glare of light and sound of warlike strains on brazen instruments, it was a relief to me when on a sudden I was surrounded by a thick cloud or mist, and my guide wafted me through the air till we alighted on a most delicious rural spot. I perceived it was the early hour of the morning, when the sun had not risen above the horizon. We were alone, except that at a little distance a young shepherd played on his flageolet as he walked before his herd, conducting them from the fold to the pasture. The elevated pastoral air he played charmed me by its simplicity, and seemed to animate his obedient flock. The atmosphere was clear and perfectly calm: and now the rising sun gradually illumined the fine landscape, and began to discover to our view the distant country of immense extent. I stood awhile in expectation of what might next present itself of dazzling splendour, when the only object which appeared to fill this natural, grand, and simple scene, was a rustic who entered not far from the place where we stood, who by his habiliments seemed nothing better than a peasant: he led a poor little ass, which was loaded with all the implements required by a painter in his work. After advancing a few paces, he stood still, and with an air of rapture seemed to contemplate the rising sun: he next fell on his knees, directed his eyes towards Heaven, crossed himself, and then went on with eager looks, as if to make choice of the most advantageous spot, from which to make his studies as a painter. "This," said my conductor, "is that Claude Gélée of Lorraine, who nobly disdaining the low employment to which he was originally bred, left it with all its advantages of competence and ease to embrace his present state of poverty, in order to adorn the world with works of most accomplished excellence.'"

## WHY THE ARTS

varied and augmented indefinitely. The number of objects to which the understanding may be directed is endless, and the results, so far as they are positive, tangible things, may be set down and added one to another, and made use of as occasion requires, without creating any confusion, and so as to produce a perpetual accumulation of useful knowledge. What is once gained is never lost, and may be multiplied daily, because this increase of knowledge does not depend upon increasing the force of the mind, but on directing the same force to different things, all of them in their nature definite, demonstrable, existing to the mind outwardly and by signs, less as the power than as the form of truth, and in which all the difficulty lies in the first invention, not in the subsequent communication. In like manner the mechanic parts of painting for instance, such as the mode of preparing colours, the laws of perspective, &c., which may be taught by rule and method, so that the principle being once known, every one may avail himself of it, these subordinate and instrumental parts of the art admit of uniform excellence, though from accidental causes it has happened otherwise. But it is not so in art itself, in its higher and nobler essence. 'There is no shuffling,' but 'we ourselves compelled to give in evidence even to the teeth and forehead of our faults.' There is no room for the division of labour—for the accumulation of borrowed advantages; no artificial scale by which *to heaven we may ascend*; because here excellence does not depend on the quantity of representative knowledge, abstracted from a variety of subjects, but on the original force of capacity, and degree of attention, applied to the same given subject, natural feelings and images. To use the distinction of a technical philosophy, science depends on the discursive or *extensive*—art on the intuitive and *intensive* power of the mind. One chemical or mathematical discovery may be added to another, because the degree and sort of faculty required to apprehend and retain them, are in both cases the same; but no one can voluntarily add the colouring of Rubens to the expression of Raphael, till he has the same eye for colour as Rubens, and for expression as Raphael—that is, the most thorough feeling of what is profound in the one, or splendid in the other—of what no rules can teach, nor words convey—and of what the mind must possess within itself, and by a kind of participation with nature, or remain for ever destitute of it. Titian and Correggio are the only painters who united to perfect colouring a degree of expression, the one in his portraits, and the other in his histories, all but equal, if not equal, to the highest. But this union of different qualities they had from nature, and not by method. In fact, we judge of science by the number of effects produced—of art by the energy which produces them. The one is knowledge—the other power.

## ARE NOT PROGRESSIVE?

The arts of painting and poetry are conversant with the world of thought within us, and with the world of sense without us—with what we know, and see, and feel intimately. They flow from the sacred shrine of our own breasts, and are kindled at the living lamp of nature. The pulse of the passions assuredly beat as high, the depths and soundings of the human heart were as well understood three thousand years ago, as they are at present; the face of nature and ‘the human face divine,’ shone as bright then as they have ever done. It is this light, reflected by true genius on art, that marks out its path before it, and sheds a glory round the Muses’ feet, like that which ‘circled Una’s angel face,

‘And made a sunshine in the shady place.’

Nature is the soul of art. There is a strength in the imagination that reposes entirely on nature, which nothing else can supply. There is in the old poets and painters a vigour and grasp of mind, a full possession of their subject, a confidence and firm faith, a sublime simplicity, an elevation of thought, proportioned to their depth of feeling, an increasing force and impetus, which moves, penetrates, and kindles all that comes in contact with it, which seems, not theirs, but given to them. It is this reliance on the power of nature which has produced those masterpieces by the Prince of Painters, in which expression is all in all, where one spirit, that of truth, pervades every part, brings down heaven to earth, mingles cardinals and popes with angels and apostles, and yet blends and harmonises the whole by the true touches and intense feeling of what is beautiful and grand in nature. It was the same trust in nature that enabled Chaucer to describe the patient sorrow of Griselda; or the delight of that young beauty in the Flower and the Leaf, shrouded in her bower, and listening, in the morning of the year, to the singing of the nightingale, while her joy rises with the rising song, and gushes out afresh at every pause, and is borne along with the full tide of pleasure, and still increases and repeats and prolongs itself, and knows no ebb. It is thus that Boccaccio, in the divine story of the Hawk, has represented Frederigo Alberigi steadily contemplating his favourite Falcon (the wreck and remnant of his fortune), and glad to see how fat and fair a bird she is, thinking what a dainty repast she would make for his Mistress, who had deigned to visit him in his low cell. So Isabella mourns over her pot of Basile, and never asks for any thing but that. So Lear calls out for his poor fool, and invokes the heavens, for they are old like him. So Titian impressed on the countenance of that young Neapolitan nobleman in the Louvre, a look that never passed away. So Nicolas Poussin describes some shepherds wandering out in a

## BRITISH INSTITUTION 1814

morning of the spring, and coming to a tomb with this inscription, 'I also was an Arcadian.'

What have we left to console us for all this? Why, we have Mr. Rogers's 'Pleasures of Memory,' and Mr. Campbell's 'Pleasures of Hope'; Mr. Westall's pictures, and all West's; Miss Burney's new novel (which is, however, some comfort), Miss Edgeworth's *Fashionable Tales*, Madame de Staël's next work, whatever it may be, and the praise of it in the *Edinburgh Review*, and Sir James Macintosh's *History*.

## BRITISH INSTITUTION (1814)

*The Morning Chronicle.*

*February 5, 1814.*

THE exhibition of this year is, we think, upon the whole, inferior to the one or two last exhibitions; for though the historical department is quite as respectably filled, there is not the same proportion of pleasing representations of common life, and natural scenery. In spite of certain classical prejudices, we should be sorry to see this which has been the most successful walk of the modern English school, neglected for the pursuit of prize-medals and *epic mottoes*, which look well in the catalogue. There is indeed a greater difference between an historical picture, and a picture of an historical subject, than even some eminent painters seem to have imagined. But we are, we confess, so little refined in our taste, as to prefer a good imitation of common nature to a bad imitation of the highest, or rather to an imitation of nothing. Many of the pictures exhibited by young artists at this Institution, have shewn a capacity for correct and happy delineation of actual objects and domestic incidents, perhaps only inferior to the master-pieces of the Dutch school, from the use of a less perfect vehicle, and the want of long practice, steadily and uniformly directed to the same object. But in the higher, and what is rather affectedly called the epic style of art,—in giving the movements of the loftier and more violent passions, this country has not a single painter to boast, who has made even a faint approach to the excellence of the great Italian painters. We have indeed a good number of specimens of the clay-figure, the bones and muscles of the man, the anatomical mechanism, the regular proportions measured by a two-foot rule—large canvasses covered with stiff figures arranged in decent order, with the characters and story correctly expressed by uplifted eyes or hands, according to old receipt-books for the passions, and with all the hardness and inflexibility of figures carved in wood, and painted over in good

## BRITISH INSTITUTION 1814

strong body colours, that look ‘as if some of nature’s journeymen had made them, and not made them well.’ But we still want a Prometheus to give life to the cumbrous mass, to throw an intellectual light over the opaque image, to embody the inmost refinements of thought to the outward eye, to lay bare the very soul of passion. That picture is of little comparative value, which can be completely *translated* into another language, of which the description in a common catalogue is as good, and conveys all that is expressed by the picture itself; for it is the excellence of every art to give what can be given by no other, in the same degree. Much less is that picture to be esteemed which only injures and defaces the idea already existing in the mind’s eye, which does not come up to the conception which the imagination forms of the subject, and substitutes a dull reality for high sentiment; for the art is in this case an incumbrance, not an assistance, and interferes with, instead of adding to, the stock of our pleasurable sensations. But we should be at a loss to point out (we will not say any English picture, but certainly) any English painter, who in heroic and classical composition, has risen to the height of his subject, and answered the expectation of the well-informed spectator, or excited the same impression by visible means as had been excited by words, or by reflection. That this inferiority in English art is not owing to a deficiency of genius, imagination, or passion, is proved sufficiently by the works of our poets and dramatic writers, which, in loftiness and force, are certainly not surpassed by those of any other nation. But whatever may be the depth of internal thought and feeling in the English character, it seems to be *more internal*, and (whether this is owing to climate, habit, or physical constitution) to have, comparatively, a less immediate and powerful communication with the organic expression of passion, which exhibits the thoughts and feelings in the countenance, and furnishes matter for the historic muse of painting. The English artist is instantly sensible that the flutter, grimace, and extravagance of the French physiognomy, are incompatible with high history; and we are at no loss to explain in this way, that is, from the defect of existing models, why the productions of the French school are marked with all the affectation of national caricature, or sink into tame and lifeless imitations of the antique. May we not account satisfactorily for the general defects of our own historic productions in a similar way,—from a certain inertness and constitutional phlegm, which does not habitually impress the workings of the mind by correspondent traces on the countenance, and which may also render us less sensible of these outward and visible signs of passion, even when they are so impressed there? The irregularity of proportion and want of symmetry in the structure of the national

## BRITISH INSTITUTION 1814

features, though it certainly enhances the difficulty of infusing natural grace and grandeur into the works of art, rather accounts for our not having been able to attain the exquisite refinements of Grecian sculpture, than for our not having rivalled the Italian painters in expression.

The strongest exception to these general remarks in the present collection, is certainly Mr. Bird's picture of *Job surrounded by his friends*. Many of the heads and figures in this very able composition have a strong and deeply infused tincture of true history. The best of them are in a mixed style, which reminds us at the same time of Annibal Caracci, and N. Poussin. The three finest figures are undoubtedly those of Job, and the man and woman seated on each side of him. The countenance of Job displays a noble firmness with a mixture of suppressed feeling, not, perhaps, sufficiently marked for the character or for the interest of the subject. The full grey drapery which envelopes his whole figure, has an admirable effect, and seems in a manner to shroud him from the attacks of external misfortune, in the consolations of his own mind. The action of the man on his right hand, pointing with his finger, and indeed the whole figure, are equally appropriate and striking. The posture of the man leaning on a marble slab, is also natural and picturesque, though it has too great an appearance of ease and indifference for the occasion. The drapery of this last figure is remarkably loose and flimsy, or what the painters, we believe, call *woolly*. There are several other good heads in the picture; but both the countenance and attitude of the man behind the messenger, and the face of the figure between Job and the front figure in red, are mean and vulgar—mere low life, without sense or dignity. The expression in the countenance of the messenger, who comes to inform Job of the last calamity that has befallen him, is neither intelligent nor beautiful; and the whole of the figure, both by its situation and the quantity of light thrown upon it, assumes a prominence disproportioned to its importance, and throws the rest of the composition into a kind of half back-ground. The story is illustrated (whether with chronological propriety or not we leave to the critics) by a groupe of figures just behind the circle of Job and his friends, carrying off the dead body of one of his children. The great fault of this picture, which displays much sense, character, study, and invention, is the heaviness and monotony of the colour. It is of one uniform leaden tone, as if it had been smeared over with putty, except where a sudden transition to a glaring red or yellow, or the introduction of a spotty light, not at all accounted for, serves, instead of relieving, to add greater weight to that mechanic gloom, which affects, not the imagination, but the eye. We think it right to notice a defect which may be more easily remedied by attention, *viz.*

## BRITISH INSTITUTION 1814

that the extremities of Mr. Bird's figures are in general very ill made out.

Mr. Allston's large picture of *The dead man restored to life by touching the bones of Elisha*, deserves great praise both for the choice and originality of the subject, the judicious arrangement of the general composition, and the correct drawing and very great knowledge of the human figure throughout. The figure of the revived soldier in the foreground is noble and striking; the drapery about him is equally well imagined and well executed. There is also a very beautiful head of a young man in a blue drapery with his hands lifted together, and in the act of attention to another, who is pointing out the miracle, which has much of the simple dignity and pathos of Raphael. With respect to the general colour and expression of this picture, we think it has too much of the look of a French composition. The faces are in the school of Le Brun's heads—theoretical diagrams of the passions—not natural and profound expressions of them; forced and overcharged, without precision or variety of character. The colouring, too, is without any strongest contrasts or general gradations, and is half-toned and half-tinted away, between reddish brown flesh and wan-red drapery, till all effect, union, and relief, is lost. It would be unjust not to add, that we think Mr. Allston's picture demonstrates great talents, great professional acquirements, and even genius; but we suspect that he has paid too exclusive an attention to the instrumental and theoretical parts of his art. The object of art is not merely to display knowledge, but to give pleasure.

There is a small picture of *Diana bathing*, by this gentleman, which we think equally admirable for the character and drawing. The knowledge of the human figure in this pleasing composition might be opposed with advantage to the utter ignorance of it in some Musidora sketches, in which the limbs seem to have been kneaded in paste, and are thrown together like a bundle of drapery.

Of Mr. Hilton's picture of *Mary Magdalen anointing the feet of our Saviour*, we have little more to say, than that the figures are much larger than life, and that, we understand, it has been purchased by the Institution for 500 guineas.

Mr. West's picture of *Lot and his Family* is one of those highly finished specimens of *metallurgy* which too often proceed from the President's hardware manufactory. As to the subject, we conceive it has been often enough treated in a country famed for 'pure religion breathing household laws.' We do not mean to lay it down as a rule, that the sublimity of the execution may not redeem the deformity of the subject of a composition, as there is a great and acknowledged difference between Shakspeare and the Newgate Calendar; but this

## BRITISH INSTITUTION 1814

of Mr. West's is a mere furniture picture, and offers no palliation from the genius displayed by the artist. Having touched unawares on this very delicate subject of the ethics of painting, we shall just notice, that the picture of *Venus weeping over the dead body of Adonis*, seems to have been painted *tout expres*, for the purpose of being bought up by some member of the Society for the Suppression of Vice.

Mr. Turner's grand landscape of *Apullius and Apullia* has one recommendation, which must always enhance the value of this most able artist's productions, that the composition is taken *verbatim* from Lord Egremont's picture of 'Jacob and Laban.' The beautiful arrangement is Claude's; the powerful execution is his own. From this specimen of parody, and from his never-enough-to-be-admired picture of 'Mercury and Herse,' we could almost wish that this gentleman would always work in the trammels of Claude or N. Poussin. All the taste and all the imagination being borrowed, his powers of eye, hand, and memory, are equal to any thing. In general, his pictures are a waste of power triumphing over the barrenness of the subject. The artist delights to go back to the first chaos of the world, or to that state when the waters were merely separated from the dry land, and no creeping thing nor herb bearing fruit was seen upon the face of the land. The figures in the present picture are execrable. Claude's are flimsy enough; but these are impudent and obtrusive vulgarity. The utter want of a capacity to draw a distinct outline with the force, the depth, the fulness, and precision of this artist's eye for colour, is truly astonishing. There is only one part of the colouring of Mr. Turner's landscape which did not please us: it is the blue of the water nearest the foreground, immediately after the dark brown shadow of the trees.

The picture of the *Favourite Lamb*, by Collins, has exquisite feeling. The groupe of children surrounding the little victim, and arresting him in his progress to the butcher's cart, has a degree of natural pathos and touching simplicity, which we have never seen surpassed in any picture of the kind. It may easily draw tears from eyes, at all used to the melting mood.

## BRITISH INSTITUTION. SECOND NOTICE

*The Morning Chronicle.*

February 10, 1814.

*A Study from Nature.*—Mrs. J. Hakewell. This is a very pleasing head, with fine expression and nature.

An *Ecce Homo*, by T. R. Guest, is equally unworthy of the subject and the art.

*The Disposal of the Favourite Lamb*, by W. Collins. We have already spoken of this picture. On reviewing it, the colouring of the landscape-part struck us as remarkably good. In general we observe of this artist's figures in the present exhibition, that they are less accurately and less forcibly painted than on former occasions. It seems the natural tendency of English art to degenerate into slovenliness, and mere effect.

*The Disgrace of Wolsey*.—Henry Monro. This is a very gay and spirited picture, in imitation of the Venetian school. Another picture by the same young artist, *Othello, Iago, and Desdemona*, has considerable originality of conception and expression. We except the head of Iago, which is an indifferent theatrical caricature.

Collins's *Town Miss visiting her Country Relations*, presents a very lively contrast of ridiculous affectation and rustic simplicity.

*Christ in the Temple*, and *Margaret of Anjou*, by R. Westall, R.A. Of this artist's works we always wish to speak well from our respect to the public taste, and are only sorry that we cannot, consistently with any regard to our own.

*An Old Man's Head*, by Owen. An admirable study.

*Joseph sold by his Brethren*.—A. Perigal. The three figures of the Ishmaelites are highly spirited and picturesque. We cannot speak so favourably of Joseph's brethren, and still less so of himself.

*Mary anointing the feet of Jesus*, by W. Hilton, A.R.A. We looked again at this picture, and it did not improve upon us. Neither in the colour nor the expression has it the requisite qualities of fine history. His *King Lear* has considerable academic merit, except the Cordelia, than which nothing can be more insipid.

*The Rabbit-man*, *The Pedlar*, and *An Old Clothes' Shop*, are three very close, but disagreeable copies of Nature, by L. Cosse.

*A Flower-Girl*, by Mrs. Ansley, has a rich velvety look. Her *Cupid* is less in character.

*A Landscape*, by J. J. Chalon, has great merit both in composition and colour.

*Early Morning*, and *The Return in the Evening*, by James Burnett, are very exquisite imitations of the manner of Cuyp, as are two other pictures by the same artist, *Crossing the Bridge*, and *Crossing the Brook*. The landscape, the animals, and the figures, are painted with equal care and felicity. There is perhaps too little variety in the composition, or rather in the objects. We do not see why Mr. Burnett should always introduce the same black cow.

*Devonshire Lace-makers*, by John Dennis, exhibits a very singular and pleasing effect of broad daylight.

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*A Laughing Girl*, by R. Kirkpatrick. Among many imitations of Sir Joshua's manner, this is the best.

*Don Quixote and Sancho journeying to the Inn after their encounter with the Yanguesian Carriers*.—Ab. Cooper. The execution of this picture is much better than the character or the design.

*Infant Pan*.—James Green. Of the Puck family.

*Gypsies regaling themselves*.—Sir W. Beechey. We can give no account of this production of Sir William's pencil, for it is to us quite unaccountable. The ass's foal in the corner of the picture seems to have been in full training for a Prince-Regent's charger!

*Peasant Boy*, by Miss M. Geddes. A very pleasant study from Nature.

*Landscape Composition*.—B. Barker. This and some other landscapes in the present collection, by the same artist, are, we think, not equal to those which he has formerly exhibited.

*A View of Edinburgh*.—T. C. Holland.

'Dun Edin—'mid thy mountain court  
Thou sitt'st like empress at her sport.'

Scott's *Marmion*.

Now in the picture, this Queen of Scotland looks like a lady in half-mourning, seated on some certain bales of green Manchester velvet. The sky is, however, very finely thrown back. We the more wondered at the want of harmony in this composition, as the *Storm*, by the same artist, is equally admirable for the tone and spirit of the execution.

*View between Tintern and Chepstow*, by W. Payne, exhibits a very beautiful burst of light, and romantic distance, but is too *purply*.

*A Heath*, by D. Cox, has great merit. It has much of the look and freshness of nature, and gives almost the very feeling of the atmosphere. Of the other landscapes, those by Havell and Nasmyth gave us the greatest pleasure. The trees of the last-mentioned artist are painted with too much attention to minute detail, and are in general too green.

*Gordale*, by James Ward, R.A. We imagine the subject of this picture is essentially defective, as it is an attempt to express physical magnitude by contrast, which can only be done by distance. The figures and animals look diminutive and contemptible, without making the surrounding scenery look grand or lofty. The same effect is in some degree produced even in nature, and much more in a picture.

Among the sculptures, we were most pleased with the group of *Hercules restoring Alcestes to Admetus*, which is truly elegant and classical. There is a head of the late Mr. Valentine Green, a strong likeness, by G. Garrard, which is quaintly described in the catalogue as a 'Study for a Bust of Time.'

## ROYAL ACADEMY 1814

### ROYAL ACADEMY (1814)

*The Morning Chronicle.*

May 3, 1814.

WE do not remember in any former Exhibition so great a number of fine Portraits as at present adorn the walls of the Academy. We conceive that this is owing not so much to a greater power of execution, as to the evident improvement in the style of the artists. We have seen exhibitions, and have lamented to see them, in which the eye in vain sought relief from the glitter of the frames in the glare of the pictures, in which vermilion cheeks made vermilion lips look pale, in which the merciless splendour of the painter's pallet put nature out of countenance, and in which the unmeaning grimace of fashion and folly was the only variety in the wide dazzling waste of colour. The great defect and impediment to the progress of British art has hitherto been a desire to produce *effect* at the expense of everything else, and by the cheapest and most obvious means, to lose all the delicacy and variety of nature in one undistinguished bloom of florid health, and all precision, truth and refinement of character in the same harmless mould of smiling, self-complacent insipidity.

'Pleased with itself, that all the world can please.'

Such, we say, has too often been the recipe of our most popular artists for obtaining fame and fortune, originating no doubt in accidental and local circumstances, and partly fostered by false taste and criticism. We are sincerely happy to be able to say that they have at present 'reformed this indifferently among them,'—and we only add, 'Oh ! let them reform it altogether.'

We proceed to notice some of the pictures which afforded us the greatest pleasure.

*Portraits of Mrs. Cowley and Son*, by Mr. Dawe, is a picture of very considerable merit. There is a fine, broad, Roman expression in the face of the mother, and the child is full of animation. The satin drapery of the mother, though well executed, sits too close, and the shadows are dingy.—*A Portrait of Dr. Parr*, by the same Artist, is an admirable and striking likeness. The attitude and composition of this portrait are peculiarly happy. There is, however, in the *tout ensemble*, a want of grace and suavity, the shadows are opaque, and form an interruption to the effect, and the hands (and we would add, as a general remark, the extremities in this artist's pictures) are very carelessly executed, or seem as if they were.

There is an excellent likeness of the same Gentleman, *Dr. Parr*, by J. J. Halls.

## ROYAL ACADEMY 1814

A pleasing *Landscape* by Bigg.

*Cupid Stung by a Bee*—West. We do not hesitate to express it as our opinion, that Mr. West is admirable only in composition. His execution, his expression, his drawing, his everything else, is bad. He is only great by the acre. In a subject like the present he has not room to turn himself. Where should he find the Graces to paint Venus? Where the curled dimples to paint Cupids? Not in straight lines or formal measurements.

*Portrait of Lord Castlereagh*, by Lawrence, is not a likeness. It has a smug, smart, upstart, haberdasher look, of which there is nothing in Lord Castlereagh. The air of the whole figure is direct, and forward; there is nothing, as there ought to be, characteristically circuitous, involved, and parenthetical in it. Besides, the features are cast in quite a different mould. As a bust, Lord Castlereagh's is one of the finest we have ever seen; it would do for one of the Roman Emperors, bating the expression.

*Woodcock Shooting*, by R. Reinagle. An admirable and characteristic composition.

We cannot praise Sir W. Beechey's *Hebe*; nor Mr. Thomson's *Thais*.

*A Wandering Stag*—P. Reinagle—seems to have lost, not only its way, but all resemblance to its former state, that is, it does not look in the least like a stag.

*A Portrait of Lady Leicester in the Character of Hope*, by Lawrence, is equally commonplace in the thought and the expression. There is not the slightest trace in the picture of the sentiment contained in the divine lines from Spenser, with which it is accompanied.

*Calypso with her Nymphs Caressing Cupid*—T. Stothard. Though neither the colouring nor the expression of this picture is natural, there is a harmony and a gusto in both that pleases the eye and reconciles the understanding to it. We cannot say the same of his *Euphrosyne*, which appears to us a violent and unmeaning caricature.

*Portraits of a Zebu Bull and Cow*, by A. Cooper. A very fine and accurate delineation of nature.

An exquisite picture of *Lord Chief Justice Gibbs*, by Owen.—This picture is a fine, true, and characteristic portrait, having all the essential peculiarities, as well as the general forms of nature in it. We really cannot see why the details are inconsistent with the general effect in a picture more than in nature, though they are represented as being so by a great authority. The portraits of *Lord Ashburnham* and *Lady Warrender*, by the same Artist, deserve more praise than we have time or ability to bestow upon them.

*Portrait of a Nobleman in the Dress of an Albanian*, by T. Phillips;

## MR. HAYDON'S SOLOMON

and *Portrait of a Nobleman*, seem to be the same individual. They are both fine. They are said to be the portrait of Lord Byron, though in that case we do not see why they should be incognito. They are too smooth, and seem, as it were 'barbered ten times o'er,' both in the face and the expression. Here is, however, much that conveys the idea of the softness and the wildness of character of the popular poet of the East.

*Eurydice hurried back to the Infernal Regions*. We were less pleased with this picture on a second view of it than we were struck with it at the first.

*Dido and Æneas*, by J. M. W. Turner. This picture, powerful and wonderful as it is, has all the characteristic splendour and confusion of an Eastern composition. It is not natural nor classical.

*Bird Catching*, by Collins. The effect of this picture is almost magical. The idea of immediate distance given to the top of the bank where the nets are laid, is beyond anything we have ever seen.

Two *Landscapes*, by J. Wilson, are both pleasing pictures.

*Dunbarton Castle*, by Nasmyth, an admirable specimen of the minute and finished style of landscape painting.

*View on the Clyde*, by the Rev. R. Lancaster, and *Wood Scene*, by the same, are true copies from nature.

## MR. HAYDON'S SOLOMON

*The Morning Chronicle*.

May 4 and 5, 1814.

THE Tenth Exhibition of the Society of Painters in Oil and Water Colours opened on Monday last. The productions of Glover, Cristall, De Wint, &c. principally fill and adorn the Water Colour Department.—Among the oil pictures in the room, the principal are, *The Judgment of Solomon*, by Mr. Haydon, and *Don Quixote receiving Mambrino's Helmet from Sancho*, by Mr. Richter. The former is a work that evidently claims a place in the higher department of art; and we are little disposed to reject that claim. It certainly shews a bold and aspiring mind; in many parts (that which we hold above all other things to be essential to the painter) an eye for the picturesque both in form and colour; considerable variety of expression, attitude and character, and great vigour and rapidity of execution throughout. It would, at the same time, be in vain to deny, that the success is not always in proportion to the effort made; that the conception of character is sometimes erroneous; that the desire to avoid insipidity and monotony has occasionally led to extravagance and distortion;

## MR. HAYDON'S SOLOMON

that there are great inequalities in the style, and some inconsistencies in the composition; and that, however striking and admirable many of the parts are, there is a want of union and complete harmony between them. What was said of the *disjecta membra poetæ* is not inapplicable to this picture. It exhibits fine studies and original fragments of a great work—it has many powerful starts of genius—without conveying that impression of uniform consistency and combined effect, which is sometimes attained by the systematic mechanism of well-disciplined dullness, and at others is the immediate emanation of genius.

That which strikes the eye most on entering the room, and on which it dwells with the greatest admiration afterwards, are the figures of the two Jewish Doctors on the left of Solomon. We do not recollect any figures in modern pictures which have a more striking effect. We say this, not only with respect to the solid mass of colour which they project on the eye, the dark draperies contrasting finely with the paleness of the countenances, but also with respect to the force, truth, and dramatic opposition of character displayed in them. The face of the one is turned in anxious expectation towards the principal actors in the scene: the other, looking downwards, appears lost in inward meditation upon it. The one is eagerly watching for the catastrophe,—the other seems endeavouring to anticipate it. Too much praise cannot be given to the conception of the figure of Solomon, which is raised above the rest of the picture, and placed in the centre—the face fronting, and looking down, the action balanced and suspended, and the face intended to combine the different characters of youth, beauty, and wisdom. Such is evidently the conception of the painter, which we think equally striking and just; but we are by no means satisfied that he has succeeded in embodying this idea, except as far as relates to the design. The expression of the countenance of the youthful judge, which ought to convey the feeling of calm penetration, we think, degenerates into supercilious indifference; the action given to the muscles is such as to destroy the beauty of the features, without giving force to the character, and instead of the majesty of conscious power and intellect, there is an appearance of languid indecision, which seems to shrink with repugnance from the difficulties which it has to encounter. The colouring of the head is unexceptionable. In the face of the good mother, the artist has, in our opinion, succeeded in overcoming that which has been always considered as the greatest difficulty of the art—the union of beauty with strong expression. The whole face exhibits the internal workings of maternal love and fear; but its death-like paleness and agony do

## HOGARTH, WILSON, ETC.

not destroy the original character of feminine beauty and delicacy. The attitude of this figure is decidedly bad, and out of nature as well as decorum. It is one of those sprawling, extravagant, theatrical French figures, in which a common action is strained to the extremity of caricature. The action and expression of the executioner are liable to the same objection. He is turbulent and fierce, instead of being cold and obdurate. He should not bluster in the part heroically like an actor—it is his office.—On the whole, we think this picture decidedly superior to any of this artist's former productions, and a proof not only of genius, but of improved taste and judgment. In speaking of it with freedom, we trust we shall best serve both him and the art.

### BRITISH INSTITUTION: HOGARTH, WILSON, ETC.

*The Morning Chronicle.*

May 7 and 10, 1814.

THE Directors of this Institution have conferred an obligation on the country and the art, by the present selection of the Works of Hogarth, Wilson, Gainsborough, and Zoffani. To the public in general, it must be highly gratifying to be able to review so many of the productions of these celebrated painters: and in the artist, and the lover of art, they must excite a still deeper feeling of interest than that which is connected with mere amusement or curiosity. There is nothing more interesting to those who devote their lives to the pursuit of fame, than the security of the tenure by which it is held, and the expectations raised by every fresh rival to which it is brought, in passing through the ordeal of public taste, must be mingled with some degree of solicitude for the event. The reputation of such artists as Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Wilson, may be said to form an intermediate link between momentary popularity and the fame of the old masters: and it is gratifying to feel the gradations through which the hand of time transmits the admiration of rare genius, mellowed and refined in its course, to posterity. These remarks indeed apply to the works of Hogarth, only as far as they are pictures; for as to their reputation as compositions, it is scarcely possible to add to, or take away from it. It has received a sanction, which it would be vain to dispute, in the universal delight and admiration with which his works have been regarded from their first appearance to the present moment. If the quantity of amusement, or of matter for reflection which they have afforded, is that by which we are to judge of precedence among the intellectual benefactors of mankind, there are, perhaps, few persons who can put in a stronger claim

## BRITISH INSTITUTION

to our gratitude than Hogarth. It is not hazarding too much to assert that he was one of the greatest comic geniuses that ever lived, and he was certainly one of the most extraordinary men this country has produced. The wonderful knowledge which he possessed of human life and manners is only to be surpassed (if it can be) by the power of invention with which he has combined and contrasted his materials in the most ludicrous and varied points of view, and by the mastery of execution with which he has embodied and made tangible the very thoughts and passing movements of the mind. Critics sometimes object to the style of Hogarth's pictures, or to the class to which they belong. First, he belongs to no class, or if he does, it is to the same class as Fielding, Smollett, Vanbrugh, or Molière. Besides, the merit of his pictures does not depend on the nature of the subject, but on the knowledge displayed of it, on the number of ideas they excite, on the fund of thought and observation contained in them. They are to be studied as works of science as well as of amusement : they satisfy our love of truth ; they fill up the void in the mind ; they form a series of plates of natural history, and of that most interesting part of natural history, the history of our own species. Make what deductions you please for the vulgarity of the subject—yet in the research, the profundity, the absolute truth and precision of the delineation of character ; in the invention of incident, in wit and humour ; in the life, with which they are 'instinct in every part ;' in everlasting variety and originality ; they never have, and probably never will be surpassed. They stimulate the faculties as well as soothe them. 'Other pictures we see, Hogarth's we read !'<sup>1</sup>

There is one error which has been sometimes entertained on this subject, and which one would think an examination of the present collection would be sufficient to dissipate, namely, that Hogarth's genius was confined to the imitation of the coarse humours and broad farce of low life. But he excelled quite as much in exhibiting the vices, the folly, and the frivolity of the fashionable manners of his time. His fine ladies do not yield to his waiting-maids and his lords and footmen maintain a very respectable equality. There is no want, for example, in the *Marriage à la Mode*, or *Taste in High Life*, of affectation verging into idiotcy, or languid sensibility that might

'Die of a rose in aromatic pain.'

Many of Hogarth's characters would form admirable illustrations of Pope's *Satires*, which are not considered as vulgar. In short, Hogarth was strictly a painter of actual, not of low life. He was a satirist, and,

<sup>1</sup> See an admirable essay on this subject, in a periodical work lately published, under the title of *The Reflector*.

## HOGARTH, WILSON, ETC.

consequently, his pencil could not dwell on the abstract and ideal, but it glanced with equal success at the vices and follies of high or low life, 'of the great vulgar and the small.'

It has been doubted whether the superiority of Hogarth was confined to his prints, or whether he had not great and almost equal merit as a painter. There has been considerable difference of opinion on this question, for which the pictures now at the Institution will easily account. The earlier specimens are evidently inferior to those of a later period, both in colour and execution, even some of those from which the finest of the prints are taken, such as *The Election Dinner*, *The Chaining the Member*, &c. As mere pictures, they are raised very little above the standard of common sign-painting; whereas, it is almost impossible to speak too highly of the mechanical excellence of some of the later works, and particularly of the *Marriage à la Mode*, which, in richness, harmony, and clearness of tone, and in truth, accuracy, and freedom of pencilling, would stand a comparison with the best productions of the Dutch school. In this series Hogarth evidently considered colour as a systematic and integral part of his art. There is the most elaborate nicety, as well as felicity, often observable in the arrangement and opposition of colour, as in the red of the chair-back next to the hair of the woman listening to the music in the third picture, the black and white dog getting upon the breakfast table in the last, the green dress of the negro boy, &c. The view of the outer room in the second picture is in a style of the most exquisite and airy splendour. Among the portraits to which curiosity will be directed, are one of Miss Fenton (afterwards Duchess of Bolton), a beautiful and elegant head, and a whole length of Captain Coram, of which the character, composition, and colouring, are admirable. The *Sigismunda* has been censured as a vulgar composition, and cited as a proof that Hogarth could not raise his imagination above the standard of common life and actual observation. On the contrary, it appears to us to be painted in the true spirit of fine history—to be delicate in the execution, and refined in the expression, at once beautiful and impassioned, and though not in the first, probably in the second class of pictures of this description.

The pictures of Zoffani in the Collection are highly curious and interesting as *facsimiles* (for such they seem to be) of some of the most celebrated characters of the last age. Wilson's landscapes will afford a high treat to every lover of the art. In all that relates to the gradation of tint, to the graceful conduct and proportions of light and shade, and to the fine, deep, and harmonious tone of nature, they are models for the student. His Italian landscapes are perhaps the best. In these his eye seems almost to have drank in the light.

## WILSON'S LANDSCAPES

Neither his English scenes nor his historical compositions give us equal pleasure.

Gainsborough's pictures did not altogether answer the expectations we had formed of them. They often display a considerable degree of taste, feeling, and fancy, particularly in the choice of the subject; but we cannot disguise our opinion that they often border upon *manner*, and have a certain affectation, flimsiness, and flutter in the execution, which injure the beauty and simple effect of the original composition.

### WILSON'S LANDSCAPES, AT THE BRITISH INSTITUTION

*The Champion.*

July 17, 1814.

THE landscapes of this celebrated artist may be divided into three classes;—his Italian landscapes, or imitations of the manner of Claude, his copies of English scenery, and his historical compositions.

The first of these are, in our opinion, by much the best; and of the pictures of this class in the present collection, we should, without any hesitation, give the preference to the *Apollo and the Seasons*, and to the *Phaeton*. The figures are of course out of the question—(Wilson's figures are as uncouth and slovenly as Claude's are insipid and finical)—but the landscape in both pictures is delightful. In looking at them we breathe the very air which the scene inspires, and feel the genius of the place present to us. In the first, there is all the cool freshness of a misty spring morning: the sky, the water, the dim horizon all convey the same feeling. The fine grey tone, and varying outline of the hills, the graceful form of the retiring lake, broken still more by the hazy shadows of the objects that repose on its bosom; the light trees that expand their branches in the air, and the dark stone figure and mouldering temple, that contrast strongly with the broad clear light of the rising day, give a charm, a truth, a force and harmony to this landscape, which produce the greater pleasure the longer it is dwelt on.—The distribution of light and shade resembles the effect of light on a globe.

The *Phaeton* has the dazzling fervid appearance of an autumnal evening; the golden radiance streams in solid masses from behind the flickering clouds; every object is baked in the sun;—the brown foreground, the thick foliage of the trees, the streams shrunk and stealing along behind the dark high banks, combine to produce that richness, and characteristic propriety of effect, which is to be found only in

## AT THE BRITISH INSTITUTION

nature, or in art derived from the study and imitation of nature. The glowing splendour of this landscape reminds us of the saying of Wilson, that in painting such subjects, he endeavoured to give the effect of insects dancing in the evening sun. His eye seemed formed to drink in the light. These two pictures, as they have the greatest general effect, are also more carefully finished in the particular details than the other pictures in the collection. This circumstance may be worth the attention of those who are apt to think that strength and slovenliness are the same thing.

*Cicero at his Villa* is a clear and beautiful representation of nature. The sky is admirable for its pure azure tone. Among the less finished productions of Wilson's pencil, which display his great knowledge of perspective, are *A Landscape with figures bathing*, in which the figures are wonderfully detached from the sea beyond; and *A View in Italy*, with a lake and a little boat, which appear at an immeasurable distance below :—the boat is diminished to

'A buoy almost too small for sight.'

*A View of Ancona*; *Adrian's Villa at Rome*; a small blue greenish landscape; *The Lake of Neimi*; a small, richly-coloured landscape of the banks of a river; and a landscape containing some light and elegant groupes of trees, are masterly and interesting sketches. *A View on the Tiber*, near Rome, a dark landscape which lies finely open to the sky; and *A View of Rome*, are successful imitations of N. Poussin. *A View of Sion House*, which is hung almost out of sight, is remarkable for the clearness of the perspective, particularly in the distant windings of the River Thames, and still more so for the parched and droughty appearance of the whole scene. The air is adust, the grass burned up and withered; and it seems as if some figures, reposing on the level, smooth shaven lawn on the river's side, would be annoyed by the parching heat of the ground. We consider this landscape, which is an old favourite, as one of the most striking proofs of Wilson's genius, as it conveys not only the image, but the feeling of nature, and excites a new interest unborrowed from the eye, like the fine glow of a summer's day. There is a sketch of the same subject, called *A View on the Thames*.

*A View near Llangollen, North Wales*; *Oakhampton Castle, Devonshire*; and *The Bridge at Llangollen*, are the principal of Wilson's English landscapes. They want almost every thing that ought to recommend them. The subjects are not fit for the landscape-painter, and there is nothing in the execution to redeem them. Ill-shaped mountains, or great heaps of earth, trees that grow against them without character or elegance, motionless water-falls, a want of relief, of trans-

## WILSON'S LANDSCAPES

parency, and distance,—without the imposing grandeur of real magnitude (which it is either not within the province of the art to give, or which is certainly not given here), are the chief features and defects of these pictures.—The same general objections apply to *Solitude*, and to one or two pictures near it, which are masses of common-place confusion. In near scenes, the effect must depend almost entirely on the difference in the execution, and the details: for the difference of colour alone is not sufficient to give relief to objects placed at a small distance from the eye. But in Wilson there are commonly no details; all is loose and general; and this very circumstance, which assisted him in giving the massy contrasts of light and shade, deprived his pencil of all force and precision within a limited space. In general, air is necessary to the landscape-painter: and for this reason, the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland afford few subjects for landscape-painting. However stupendous the scenery of that country is, and however powerful and lasting the impression which it must always make on the imagination, yet the effect is not produced merely through the eye of the spectator, but arises chiefly from collateral and associated feelings. There is the knowledge of the distance from which we have seen the objects, in the midst of which we are now placed,—the slow, improgessive motion which we make in traversing them,—the abrupt precipice,—the torrent's roar,—the dizzy rapture and boundless expanse of the prospect from the highest mountains,—the difficulty of their ascent,—their loneliness, and silence;—in short, there is a constant sense and superstitious awe of the collective power of matter, of the gigantic and eternal forms of nature, on which from the beginning of time the hand of man has made no impression, and which by the lofty reflections they excite in him, give a sort of intellectual sublimity even to his sense of physical weakness. But there is little in all these circumstances that can be translated into the picturesque, which depends not on the objects themselves, so much as on the symmetry and relation of these objects to one another. In a picture a mountain shrinks to a molehill, and the lake that expands its broad bosom to the sky, seems hardly big enough to launch a fleet of cockle-shells.

Wilson's historical landscapes, the two *Niobes*, *Celadon and Amelia*, *Meleager and Atalanta*, do not, in our opinion, deserve the name; that is, they do not excite feelings corresponding with the scene and story represented. They neither display true taste nor fine imagination; but are affected and violent exaggerations of clumsy, common nature. They are all made up of the same mechanical materials, an overhanging rock, bare shattered trees, black rolling clouds, and forked lightning. The scene of *Celadon and Amelia*, though it may

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be proper for a thunder-storm, is not a place for lovers to walk in. The *Meleager and Atalanta* is remarkable for nothing but a castle at a distance, very much 'resembling a goose-pye.' The figures in the two other pictures are not like the children of *Niobe*, punished by the Gods, but like a groupe of rustics, crouching from a hail-storm. In one of these, however, there is a fine break in the sky worthy of the subject. We agree with Sir J. Reynolds, that Wilson's mind was not, like N. Poussin's, sufficiently imbued with the knowledge of antiquity to transport the imagination two thousand years back, to give natural objects a sympathy with preternatural events, and to inform rocks, and trees, and mountains with the presence of a God.<sup>1</sup>

The writer of the Preface to the Catalogue of the British Gallery, says—'Few artists have excelled Wilson in the tint of air, perhaps the most difficult point of attainment for the landscape-painter : every object in his pictures keeps its place, because each is seen through its proper medium. *This excellence alone* gives a charm to his pencil, and by judicious application may be turned to the advantage of the British artist.'—This praise is equivocal : if it be meant that 'the tint of air' is the only excellence of Wilson's landscapes, the observation is not true. He had also great truth, harmony, and richness of local colouring ; he had a fine feeling of the proportions and conduct of light and shade ; and, in general, an eye for graceful form, as far as regards the bold and varying outlines of indefinite objects—as may be seen in his foregrounds, hills, &c.—where the mind is left to chuse according to an abstract principle, as it is filled or affected agreeably by certain combinations,—and is not tied down to an imitation of characteristic and articulate forms. In his figures, trees, cattle, buildings and in every thing which has a determinate and regular form, Wilson's pencil was not only deficient in accuracy of outline, but even in perspective and actual relief. His trees, in particular, seem pasted on the canvas, like botanical specimens.

We shall close these remarks with observing, that we cannot subscribe to the opinion of those who assert that Wilson was superior to Claude as a man of genius : nor can we discern any other grounds for this opinion, than those which lead to the general conclusion, that the more slovenly the performance, the finer the picture ; and that

<sup>1</sup> The faces of N. Poussin want expression, as his figures want grace ; but the landscape part of his historical compositions was never surpassed. In his Plague of Athens the buildings seem stiff with horror. His Giants seated on the tops of their fabled mountains, and playing on their Pan's pipes, are as natural and familiar as 'silly shepherds sitting in a row.' The finest of his landscapes is his picture of the Deluge. The sun is just seen wan and drooping in his course, the sky is bowed down with a weight of waters, and heaven and earth seem commingling.

## MR. WEST'S PICTURE

that which is imperfect is superior to that which is perfect. It might as well be said, that a sign-painting is better than the reflection of a landscape in a mirror; and the only objection that can be made in the latter case cannot be made to the landscapes of Claude, for in them the Graces themselves have, with their own hands, assisted in disposing and selecting every object.—Is the general effect in his pictures injured by the details? Is the truth inconsistent with the beauty of the imitation? Are the scope and harmony of the whole destroyed by the exquisite delicacy of every part? Does the perpetual profusion of objects and scenery, all perfect in themselves, interfere with the simple grandeur, and immense extent of the whole? Does the precision with which a plant is marked in the foreground, take away from the air-drawn distinctions of the blue, glimmering distant horizon? Is there any want of that endless airy space, where the eye wanders at liberty under the open sky, explores distant objects, and returns back as from a delightful journey? There is no comparison between him and Wilson. The landscapes of Claude have all that is exquisite and refined in art and nature. Every thing is moulded into grace and harmony; and at the touch of his pencil, shepherds with their flocks, temples and groves, and winding glades, and scattered hamlets, rise up in never-ending succession, under the azure sky, and the resplendent sun, ‘while universal Pan,

‘Knit with the Graces, and the hours in dance,  
Leads on the eternal spring.’—

There is a fine apostrophe in a sonnet of Michael Angelo's to the earliest Poet of Italy :

‘Fain would I to be what our Dante was,  
Forego the happiest fortunes of mankind;’

What landscape-painter does not feel this of Claude !<sup>1</sup>

## MR. WEST'S PICTURE OF CHRIST REJECTED

*The Champion.*

June 26, 1814.

It must, doubtless, afford considerable triumph to the sanguine admirers of English art to reflect, that in coming out from the rich collection of Hogarth's works, at present exhibited at the British Gallery,—whether they turn to the right or the left, they can hardly fail to meet with works nearly as much, if not more, to their taste.

<sup>1</sup> The reader is referred to an elegant and beautiful description of Claude, in Mr. Northcote's *Dream of a Painter*.

## OF CHRIST REJECTED

On the one hand, there is Mr. Westall's Gallery, the elegant antithesis to the style of Hogarth, where, instead of that originality of character which excludes a nice attention to general forms, we have all that beauty of form which excludes the possibility of character; the refined essence and volatilized spirit of art, without any of the *caput mortuum* of nature; and where, instead of her endless variety, peculiarities and defects, we constantly meet with the same classical purity and undeviating simplicity of idea—one sweet smile, one heightened bloom diffused over all. On the other hand, in turning to Mr. West's Great Picture, we are struck with all that grandeur of subject, magnitude of proportion, regularity of design,—and, in short, with everything, which is not to be found in Hogarth—*except character and expression!*

It is with some little reluctance that we are led to offer the following strictures on the last and greatest work of this celebrated and highly respectable artist. Seriously, we cannot agree with the account given by some of our contemporaries of the rank which his picture is destined to hold in the art; and still less with the account which Mr. West himself gives of it. The objections which we shall have to make, ought indeed to be considered as applying rather to the *Catalogue* which accompanies the picture, than to the *Picture* itself. The merits and defects of a composition on so extended a scale, might very well have been left to speak for themselves, or at least we should have looked at them 'more indifferently' if Mr. West had not come forward, as the *Bayes* of his own performance, to 'insinuate the plot' into the spectator, and to spread a veil of solemn mystery and religious awe over his performance, which is calculated to impose on the most sober judgment and the most practised eye. There is no degree of extravagant and absurd presumption, which a certain well-concerted gravity of manner will not in general conceal from ourselves as well as others. Mr. West, in the present instance, without any apparent sense of impropriety, represents his grand work as if it were of a class by itself; places it on a level with the sublimity of Scripture; professedly enters the lists with hallowed prophets and holy evangelists; informs us that he has here undertaken 'the delineation of nearly the whole scale of human passions, from the basest to those which partake most of the divine nature,'—and concludes in the following mingled strain of piety and loyalty:—'Mr. West feels that he should be deficient in his gratitude to the Supreme Being, who gave and continued to him life and health, and to his King, who graciously bestowed on him the requisite means of exertion in the exalted department of historical painting, if he did not embrace this favourable opportunity to acknowledge these invaluable favours.

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They have enabled him to present this picture as his Fiftieth Annual Exhibition to the Public, without an omission—his forty-seventh under his Majesty's benign patronage, and the third under his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, who has been graciously pleased to honour this Picture, and the Arts, with his protection.'

Now this is fulsome. We do not know whether the Public will join in this thanksgiving oration of the President—but 'Amen sticks in our throats.' We can no longer wonder at being told by some friendly hand, two years ago, in the description of the picture of the *Healing of the Sick*, that that work distinctly surpassed the *Transfiguration* of Raphael, the *Raising of Lazarus* by Sebastian del Piombo, the *Taking down from the Cross* by Michael Angelo, the *St. Jerome* of Domenichino, with all the other great works which had preceded it, whose collected splendour vanished into nothing before this new sun of Art,

'That seem'd another morn ris'n on mid-noon.'

The real lovers of the art will always be ready to render to Mr. West the tribute of praise which is his due; but they must turn with disgust from that spurious and preposterous adulation which can only arm the resentment of criticism, and lead to a fastidious severity of comparison between his works and those of others, which the mediocrity of their pretensions would not otherwise call for.

The general standard of reputation, to which Mr. West's pictures may justly aspire; the distinction between the excellencies which they almost invariably possess, and those which they as invariably want, is tolerably clear and certain. They have all that can be required in what relates to the composition of the subject; the regular arrangement of the groupes; the anatomical proportions of the human body; and the technical knowledge of expression, as far as this is reducible to abstract rules, and is merely a vehicle for the telling of a story; so that anger, wonder, sorrow, pity, &c., have each their appropriate and well-known designations. These, however, are but the negative and instrumental parts of the art; the means, not the end:—but beyond these, Mr. West's pictures are nothing. They never 'snatch a grace beyond the reach of Art.' They exhibit only the frame and groundwork of historical compositions; the rudiments, not the perfection of painting; the *mask* of expression, not expression itself. Perhaps in the entire body of Mr. West's productions, however meritorious the design and composition often are, there is not to be found a single instance of exquisite sentiment, or colour, or drawing; not one face or figure, hand or eye, which can be dwelt upon as an essence in its kind; as carrying truth, or beauty, or grandeur, to that height

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of excellence to which they have been sometimes carried, and beyond which the mind has no wish or conception that they should go. In fact, Mr. West's pictures are made up of a great quantity of indifferent materials, formally put together. Sir Joshua Reynolds lays it down, that in Art many little things can never make one great one. Mr. West, on the contrary, seems to suppose that a hundred very bad portraits make a very fine historical picture. But history includes portrait-painting, and is only *imaginary* portrait-painting. It is not very conceivable how, without the power of copying nature as it is, there should be the power of copying it as it ought to be. 'If we love not our brother whom we have seen,' &c. All the great historical painters have been great portrait-painters;—or as that formidable coverer of formidable canvasses, the late Mr. Barry, contemptuously expresses it, 'had a knack of face-painting.' Without faces, one of these 'Epic' compositions is not a picture, but a map.

To proceed to the Catalogue. 'For such a subject as the present,' says our auto-critic, 'an epic composition was demanded: for it seemed every way proper, that the principal characters in the history, as well as the Divine Chief himself, should be brought together on the canvass, and represented by the pencil, as they had been described by the hallowed Prophets and Holy Evangelists.' And again: 'It has been Mr. West's object, in the delineation of this subject, to excite feelings in the Spectator similar to those produced by a perusal of the Sacred Texts, which so pathetically describe these awful events.'

This certainly ought to have been Mr. West's object, in his version of the sacred text into the language of the pencil, but we cannot say that we find any of the spirit of the original in the translation. To begin with the figure of our Saviour—'whom the pencil has wished to represent as standing with a divine composure, while with a dignified and mute pensiveness and resignation, he is absorbed in the grandeur of the end, for which he came into the world.' Such is Mr. West's own account: and, 'so should his anticipation prevent our discovery,' but we cannot find that the execution answers to the intention;—for instead of the image of the divine nature, shrouded in the veil of humanity,—of the understanding of the Son of God tempering the passions and anguish of the heart of man,—Mr. West has presented us with a naked, shivering, dough-baked figure, that looks 'like a sick girl.' In aiming to give the extremes of sublimity and pathos, the artist has missed both; and for the awful tranquillity of the Saviour of the World, has given the mawkish insensibility of the hero of a whining love-tale. Pilate is better, and is probably as good a representative of the Roman Governor as a Roman actor on the stage would have been, crowned with a wreath of laurel. Caiaphas,

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the high priest, has a great deal of force, prominence, and spirit, both in the painting, action, and expression; though we by no means think the latter of the epic kind. By this word, *epic*, we can understand nothing but powerful passion combined with powerful intellect. Now we do not find these constituents of the epic style in the present instance. The character is coarse and violent. We do not hesitate to say, that the best part of the picture is the groupe of Pharisees, &c., immediately behind the chief priest. The different modes of malignity, cunning, &c., are indicated with considerable variety and precision: and we conceive that these heads are evidently better for having been less painted over, so that the original lines and markings have not been lost in the sweeping facility of the President's pencil; they are only just put in with a sort of dead colour. As for the rest of the figures, in the foreground, Joseph of Arimathea, James the Less, St. Peter, Mary Magdalen, the Third Mary, and the other women from Galilee,—‘in the midst of whom,’ says Mr. West, ‘stands the beloved disciple, supporting the Mother of Jesus, a representation in unison with our Saviour's words to his Mother when he was on the Cross’;—we cannot say that they ‘excite in us feelings similar to those produced by a perusal of the sacred text.’—What are the feelings, then, which they do excite in us?—Why, really, if it did not look like an abuse of the liberty of the press—we should say, that so far from answering to our ideas of the epic style, Joseph of Arimathea reminds us of a respectable elderly country gentleman in the gallery of the House of Commons, listening to a speech of Lord Castle-reagh's;—James the Less is a pert yeoman's son, thrusting himself forward to see a trial at Guildhall, or the humours of an election dinner;—St. Peter is a poor old man, who has had his goods distrained for rent;—Mary Magdalen would do for one of the sprawling figures, Ceres, or Juno, or Minerva, that we see at the head of ships of war;—the Third Mary is a clumsy copy from one of the numbers of the *Belle Assemblée*; the old woman close to her, a romantic washer-woman, with grisled locks, worse ‘than our maid's aunt of Brentford,’—or than the old woman in Fontaine;—and the rest of the female groupe are of the same stamp, except one, standing behind, in a flowing purple drapery, and with a neck and fine side-face, which (for a wonder) seem ‘made of penetrable stuff.’ If there was anything in the world which could have touched Mr. West's pencil, it must have been the intense feeling, and ‘power of love sublime,’ conveyed in the passage which he has had the temerity to quote.—‘Woman, behold thy Son, and turning to the beloved disciple—Behold, thy Mother.’ We have some old recollections, some yearnings of tenderness connected with this passage, which, if Mr. West

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had in the most distant way recalled, we should have thanked him ; but no such thing : Mr. West's mind is without that master-key, which moves in concert with the imagination. But what shall we say to the Good Centurion, who is bringing in his young and amiable family ? Nothing, but that we do not see any gold or silver medals, testaments, or spelling-books to be given away to good boys and girls ;—or to the *santoccini* figures of Herod and his men of war, and Pilate's wife in the gallery ? Nothing, but that Mr. West should either see Paul Veronese's *Marriage of Cana* ; or, that if he has seen it, he should never paint another gallery ;—or to the armed soldiers and the executioner sitting on the cross in the foreground explaining, by the help of an epic nail, the nature of a crucifixion to two youths, who are said to be ' affected in a manner suitable to their early sensibilities ? ' Nothing, but that our artist should never introduce brass, or steel, or wood, into his pictures, for they are a vile index to the rest of the composition ; and when the eye has caught the resemblance, it cannot soon discard it.

In describing ' the baser passions,' we are decidedly of opinion that Mr. West has succeeded better than in delineating those ' which partake most of the divine nature.' He has fairly unloaded the gibbets, and swept the streets of their scum. Falstaff could not boast of such a set of scare-crows. If Hogarth had had the same subjects, he would, at least, have *humanized* them !

This article has run to a tedious length, partly from the respect which we owe to Mr. West, and partly from the respect which we owe to ourselves. We might sum up our opinion in one word, by saying, that there is in the present picture an absolute want of what is called *gusto* throughout ; nor can we describe our idea of Mr. West's style in general better than by saying that it is the reverse of Raphael's. The difference is this. In Raphael, every muscle and nerve has intense feeling. The same divine spirit breathes from every part ; it either agitates the inmost frame, or plays in gentle undulations on the trembling surface. Whether we see his figures bending with all the blandishments of maternal love, or standing in the motionless silence of thought, or hurried into the tumult of action, the whole is bursting with expression. But Mr. West makes no use whatever of the movable frame of the countenance, the only language it possesses ; he sees and feels nothing in the human face but bones and cartilages : or if he does avail himself of this flexible machinery, it is only by rule and method. The effect is not that which the soul of passion impresses on it, and which the soul of genius alone can seize ; but such as might be given to wooden puppets or pasteboard figures, pulled by wires, and taught to open the mouth, or knit the forehead,

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or raise the eyes with a great deal of significance. It is not the hardness of the outline, but the want of inflection in the lines themselves, of *malleability* in the very texture of the countenance, that is the real and insurmountable objection to Mr. West's pictures, which are not of the epic but of the didactic kind; not poetry, but prose.

These remarks may probably be regarded as not sufficiently liberal and patriotic. We do not think, however, that in a national point of view we can establish our pretensions to genius by shewing our want of taste; and we think it right, for the sake of the art itself, not to disguise our opinion, that the effect of Mr. West's pictures must be to mislead the young student to prefer quantity to quality, and to suppose that the excellence of the picture is necessarily in proportion to the grandeur of the subject, and the extent of the canvass.

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*The Champion.*

July 31, 1814.

THERE is an anecdote connected with the reputation of Gainsborough's Pictures, which rests on pretty good authority. Sir Joshua Reynolds, at one of the Academy dinners, speaking of Gainsborough, said to a friend, 'He is undoubtedly the best English landscape-painter.' 'No,' said Wilson, who overheard the conversation, 'he's not the best English landscape-painter, but he is the best portrait-painter in England.' They were certainly both wrong; but the story is creditable to the variety of Gainsborough's talents.

Of his portraits, in the present collection at the British Gallery, the only fine one is *A Portrait of a Youth*. This picture is from Lord Grosvenor's collection, where it used to look remarkably well, and has been sometimes mistaken for a Vandyke. There is a spirited glow of youth about the face, and the attitude is striking and elegant. The drapery of blue satin is admirably painted. The *Portrait of Garrick* is interesting as a piece of biography. He looks much more like a gentleman than in Reynold's tragi-comic representation of him. —There is a considerable lightness and intelligence in the expression of the face, and a piercing vivacity about the eyes, to which the attention is immediately directed. Gainsborough's own portrait, which has, however, much truth and character, and makes a fine print, seems to have been painted with the handle of his brush. There is a portrait of *The Prince Regent leading a horse*, in which it must be confessed the man has the advantage of the animal.

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Gainsborough's landscapes are of two classes, or periods; his early and his later pictures. The former are, we imagine, the best. They are imitations of nature, or of painters who imitated nature;—such as a *Woody Scene*; another, which is a fine imitation of Ruysdael; and a *Road Side, with figures*, which has great truth and clearness. His later pictures are flimsy caricatures of Rubens, who himself carried inattention to accuracy of detail to the utmost limit that it would bear. Lord Bacon says, that 'distilled books are, like distilled waters, flashy things.' The same may be said of pictures.—Gainsborough's latter landscapes are bad water-colour drawings, washed in by mechanical movements of the hand, without any communication with the eye. The truth seems to be, that Gainsborough found there was something wanting in his '*early manner*,'—that is, something beyond mere literal imitation of natural objects, and he seems to have concluded, rather hastily, that the way to arrive at that *something more*, was to discard truth and nature altogether. He accordingly ran from one extreme into the other. We cannot conceive anything carried to a greater excess of slender execution and paltry glazing, than *A Fox hunted with grey-hounds*, *A romantic Landscape with Sheep at a Fountain*, and many others. We were, however, much pleased with an upright landscape, with figures, which has a fine, fresh appearance of the open sky, with a dash of the wildness of Salvator Rosa; and also with *A Bank of a River*, which is remarkable for the elegance of the forms and the real delicacy of the execution. *A Group of Cattle in a warm Landscape* is an evident imitation of Rubens, but no more like to Rubens than 'I to Hercules.' *Landscape with a Waterfall* should be noticed for the sparkling clearness of the distance. *Sportsmen in a Landscape* is copied from Teniers with much taste and feeling, though very inferior to the original picture in Lord Radnor's collection.

Of the fancy pictures, on which Gainsborough's fame chiefly rests, we are disposed to give the preference to his *Cottage Children*. There is, we apprehend, greater truth, variety, force, and character, in this groupe, than in any other. The colouring of the light-haired child is particularly true to nature, and forms a sort of natural and innocent contrast to the dark complexion of the elder sister, who is carrying it. *The Girl going to the Well* is, however, the general favourite. The little dog is certainly admirable. His hair looks as if it had been just washed and combed. The attitude of the *Girl* is also perfectly easy and natural. But there is a consciousness in the turn of the head, and a sentimental pensiveness in the expression, which is not taken from nature, but intended as an improvement on it. There is a regular insipidity, a systematic vacancy, a round,

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unvaried smoothness, to which real nature is a stranger, and which is only an idea existing in the painter's mind. We think the gloss of art is never so ill bestowed as on subjects of this kind, which ought to be studies of natural history. It is perhaps the general fault of Gainsborough, that he presents us with an ideal common life, whereas it is only the reality that is here good for any thing. His subjects are softened and sentimentalised too much, it is not simple, unaffected nature that we see, but nature sitting for her picture. Gainsborough, we suspect, from some of the pictures in this collection, led the way to that masquerade style, which piques itself on giving the air of an Adonis to the driver of a hay-cart, and models the features of a milk-maid on the principles of the antique. The *Girl and Pigs* is hardly liable to this objection. There is a healthy glow in the girl's face, which seems the immediate effect of the air blowing upon it. The expression is not quite so good. The *Fox-dogs* are admirable. The young one is even better than the old one, and has undeniable hereditary pretensions. The *Shepherd Boys* are fine. We do not like the *Boys with Dogs fighting*. We see no reason why the one should be so handsome and the other so ugly, why the one should be so brown and the other so yellow, or why their dogs should be of the same colour as themselves: nor why the worst-looking of the two should be most anxious to part the fray. The sketch of the *Woodman*, the original of which was unfortunately burned, fully justifies all the reputation it has acquired. It is a really fine study from nature. There is a picture of Gainsborough's somewhere of *A Shepherd Boy in a Storm*, of which we many years ago saw an indifferent copy in a broker's shop, but in which the unconscious simplicity of the boy's expression, looking up with his hands folded, and with timid wonder, the noisy chattering of a magpye perched above him, and the rustling of the coming storm in the branches of the trees, produced a romantic pastoral impression, which we have often recalled with no little pleasure since that time. We have always, indeed, felt a strong prepossession in favour of Gainsborough, and were disappointed at not finding his pictures in the present collection, all that we had wished to find them.

He was to be considered, perhaps, rather as a man of taste, and of an elegant and feeling mind, than as a man of genius; as a lover of the art, rather than an artist. He pursued it, with a view to amuse and sooth his mind, with the ease of a gentleman, not with the severity of a professional student. He wished to make his pictures, like himself, amiable; but a too constant desire to please almost necessarily leads to affectation and effeminacy. He wanted that vigour of intellect, which perceives the beauty of truth; and thought

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that painting was to be gained, like other mistresses, by flattery and smiles. It is an error which we are disposed to forgive in one, around whose memory, both as a man and an artist, many fond recollections, many vain regrets must always linger. Peace to his shade !<sup>1</sup>

### FINE ARTS. WHETHER THEY ARE PROMOTED BY ACADEMIES AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

*The Champion.*

August 28, 1814.

THE Directors of the British Institution conclude the preface to their catalogue of the works of Hogarth, Wilson, &c. in the following words.

‘The present exhibition, while it gratifies the taste and feeling of the lover of art, may tend to excite animating reflections in the mind of the artist : *if at a time when the art received little comparative support such works were produced, a reasonable hope may be entertained that we shall see productions of still higher attainment, under more encouraging circumstances.*’

It should seem that a contrary conclusion might more naturally have suggested itself from a contemplation of the collection, with which the Directors of the Institution have so highly gratified the public taste and feeling. When the real lover of art looks round, and sees the works of Hogarth and of Wilson,—works which were produced in obscurity and poverty,—and recollects the pomp and pride of patronage under which these works are at present recommended to public notice, the obvious inference which strikes him is, how little the production of such works depends on ‘the most encouraging circumstances.’ The visits of the gods of old did not always add to the felicity of those whose guests they were ; nor do we know that the countenance and favours of the great will lift the arts to that height of excellence, or will confer all those advantages which are expected from the proffered boon. The arts are of humble growth and station ; they are the

<sup>1</sup> The idea of the necessity of tampering with nature, or giving what is called a *flattering likeness*, was universal in this country fifty years ago. This would no doubt be always easy, if the whole of the art consisted in leaving out, and not putting in, what is to be found in nature. It may not be improper to add here, that, in our opinion, Murillo is at the head of the class of painters, who have treated subjects of common life. There is something in his pictures which is not to be found at all in the productions of the Dutch school. After making the colours on the canvass feel and think, the next best thing is to make them breathe and live. But there is in Murillo's pictures a look of real life, a cordial flow of animal spirits, to be met with no where else. We might here particularly refer to his picture of the *Two Spanish Beggar-boys* in Mr. Desenfans' collection, which cannot be forgotten by those who have ever seen it.

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product of labour and self-denial; they have their seat in the heart of man, and in his imagination; it is there they labour, have their triumphs there, and unseen and unthought of, perform their ceaseless task.—Indeed, patronage, and works of art deserving patronage, rarely exist together; for it is only when the arts have attracted public esteem, and reflect credit on the patron, that they receive this flattering support, and then it generally proves fatal to them. We really do not see how the man of genius should be improved by being transplanted from his closet to the anti-chambers of the great, or to a fashionable rout. He has no business there—but to bow, to flatter, to smile, to submit to the caprice of taste, to adjust his dress, to think of nothing but his own person and his own interest, to talk of the antique, and furnish designs for the lids of snuff-boxes, and ladies' fans!

The passage above alluded to evidently proceeds on the common mistaken notion, that the progress of the arts depends entirely on the cultivation and encouragement bestowed on them; as if taste and genius were perfectly mechanical, arbitrary things,—as if they could be bought and sold, and regularly contracted for at a given price. It confounds the fine arts with the mechanic arts,—art with science. It supposes that feeling, imagination, invention, are the creatures of positive institution; that the temples of the muses may be raised and supported by voluntary contribution; that we can enshrine the soul of art in a stately pile of royal patronage, inspire corporate bodies with taste, and carve out the direction to fame in letters of stone on the front of public buildings. That the arts in any country may be at so low an ebb as to be capable of great improvement by positive means, so as to reach the common level to which such means can carry them, there is no doubt or question: but after they have in any particular instance by native genius and industry reached their highest eminence, to say that they will, by mere artificial props and officious encouragement, arrive at a point of 'still higher attainment,' is assuming a good deal too much. Are we to understand that the laudable efforts of the British Institution are likely, by the mere operation of natural causes, to produce a greater comic painter, a more profound describer of manners than Hogarth? Or even that the lights and expectations held out in the preface to the British catalogue, will enable some one speedily to surpass the general excellence of Wilson's landscapes? Is there anything in the history of art to warrant such a conclusion—to support this theory of progressive perfectibility under the auspices of patrons and vice-patrons, presidents and select committees?

On the contrary, as far as the general theory is concerned the traces of youth, manhood, and old age are almost as distinctly marked in

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the history of the art as of the individual. The arts have in general risen rapidly from their first obscure dawn to their meridian height and greatest lustre, and have no sooner reached this proud eminence than they have as rapidly hastened to decay and desolation. It is a little extraordinary, if the real sources of perfection are to be sought in Schools, in Models, and Public Institutions, that wherever schools, models, and public institutions have existed, there the arts should regularly disappear,—that the effect should never follow from the cause. The Greek statues remain to this day unrivalled,—the undisputed standard of the most perfect symmetry of form. What then has the Genius of progressive improvement been doing all this time? Has he been reposing after his labours? How is it that the moderns are still so far behind, notwithstanding all that was done ready to their hands by the ancients,—when they possess a double advantage over them, and have not nature only to form themselves upon, but nature and the antique? In Italy the art of painting has had the same fate. After its long and painful struggles in the time of the earlier artists, Cimabue, Ghirlandaio, Masaccio, and others, it burst out with a light almost too dazzling to behold, in the works of Titian, Michael Angelo, Raphael, and Correggio; which was reflected, with diminished lustre, in the productions of their immediate disciples; lingered for a while with the school of the Carraccis, and expired with Guido Reni. For with him disappeared—

‘The last of those bright clouds,  
That on the unsteady breeze of honour sailed  
In long procession, calm and beautiful.’

From that period, painting sunk to so low a state in Italy as to excite only pity or contempt. There is not a single name to redeem its faded glory from utter oblivion. Yet this has not been owing to any want of Dilettanti and Della Cruscan societies,—of academies of Florence, of Bologna, of Parma, and Pisa,—of honorary members and Foreign Correspondents—of pupils and teachers, professors and patrons, and the whole busy tribe of critics and connoisseurs. Art will not be constrained by mastery, but at sight of the formidable array prepared to receive it,

‘Spreads its light wings, and in a moment flies.’

The genius of painting lies buried under the Vatican, or skulks behind some old portrait of Titian from which it stole out lately to paint a miniature of Lady Montagu! What is become of the successors of Rubens, Rembrandt, and Vandyke? What have the French Academicians done for the arts; or what will they ever do, but add intolerable

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affectation and grimace to centos of heads from the antique, and caricature Greek forms by putting them into opera attitudes? Were Claude Lorraine, or Nicolas Poussin, formed by the rules of De Piles or Du Fresnoy? There are no general tickets of admission to the temple of Fame, transferable to large societies, or organised bodies,—the paths leading to it are steep and narrow, for by the time they are worn plain and easy, the niches are full. What extraordinary advances have we made in our own country in consequence of the establishment of the Royal Academy? What greater names has the English School to boast, than those of Hogarth, Reynolds, and Wilson, who owed nothing to it? Even the venerable president of the Royal Academy was one of its founders.

It is plain then that the sanguine anticipation of the preface-writer, however amiable and patriotic in its motive, has little foundation in fact. It has even less in the true theory and principles of excellence in the art.

‘It has been often made a subject of complaint,’ says a cotemporary critic, ‘that the arts in this country, and in modern times, have not kept pace with the general progress of society and civilisation in other respects, and it has been proposed to remedy the deficiency by more carefully availing ourselves of the advantages which time and circumstances have placed within our reach, but which we have hitherto neglected, the study of the antique, the formation of academies, and the distribution of prizes.

‘First, the complaint itself, that the arts do not attain that progressive degree of perfection which might reasonably be expected from them, proceeds on a false notion, for the analogy appealed to in support of the regular advances of art to higher degrees of excellence, totally fails; it applies to science, not to art. Secondly, the expedients proposed to remedy the evil by adventitious means are only calculated to confirm it. The arts hold immediate communication with nature, and are only derived from that source. When that original impulse no longer exists, when the inspiration of genius is fled, all the attempts to recal it are no better than the tricks of galvanism to restore the dead to life. The arts may be said to resemble Antæus in his struggle with Hercules, who was strangled when he was raised above the ground, and only revived and recovered his strength when he touched his mother earth.’

We intend to offer a few general observations in illustration of this view of the subject, which appears to us to be just. There are three ways in which institutions for the promotion of the fine arts may be supposed to favour the object in view; either by furnishing the best models to the student,—or by holding out the prospect of imme-

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diate patronage and reward,—or by diffusing a more general taste for the arts. All of these, so far from answering the end proposed, will be found on examination to have a contrary tendency.

### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

*The Champion.*

September 11, 1814.

‘It was ever the trick of our English nation, if they had a good thing, to make it too common.’

WE observed in the conclusion of our last article on this subject, that there were three ways in which academics or public institutions might be supposed to promote the fine arts,—either by furnishing the best models to the student, or by holding out immediate emolument and patronage, or by improving the public taste. We shall consider each of these in order.

First, a constant reference to the best models of art necessarily tends to enervate the mind, to intercept our view of nature, and to distract the attention by a variety of unattainable excellence. An intimate acquaintance with the works of the celebrated masters may, indeed, add to the indolent refinements of taste, but will never produce one work of original genius,—one great artist. In proof of the general truth of this observation, we might cite the works of Carlo Maratti, of Raphael Mengs, or of any of the effeminate school of critics and copyists, who have attempted to blend the borrowed beauties of others in a perfect whole. What do they contain, but a negation of every excellence which they pretend to combine? Inoffensive insipidity is the utmost that can ever be expected, because it is the utmost that ever was attained, from the desire to produce a balance of good qualities, and to animate lifeless compositions by the transfusion of a spirit of originality. The assiduous imitator, in his attempts to grasp all, loses his hold of that which was placed within his reach, and, from aspiring at universal excellence, sinks into uniform mediocrity.<sup>1</sup> The student who has models of every kind of excellence constantly

<sup>1</sup> There is a certain pedantry, a given division of labour, an almost exclusive attention to some one object, which is necessary in Art, as in all the works of man. Without this, the unavoidable consequence is a gradual dissipation and prostitution of intellect, which leaves the mind without energy to devote to any pursuit the pains necessary to excel in it, and suspends every purpose in irritable imbecility. But the modern painter is bound not only to run the circle of his own art, but of all others. He must be ‘statesman, chemist, fiddler, and buffoon.’ He must have too many accomplishments to excel in his profession. When every one is bound to know every thing, there is no time to do any thing.

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before him, is not only diverted from that particular walk of art, in which, by patient exertion, he might have obtained ultimate success, but, from having his imagination habitually raised to an overstrained standard of refinement, by the sight of the most exquisite examples in art, he becomes impatient and dissatisfied with his own attempts, determines to reach the same perfection all at once, or throws down his pencil in despair. Thus the young enthusiast, whose genius and energy were to rival the great Masters of antiquity, or create a new æra in the art itself, baffled in his first sanguine expectations, reposes in indolence on what others have done; wonders how such perfection could have been achieved,—grows familiar with the minutest peculiarities of the different schools,—flutters between the splendour of Rubens and the grace of Raphael, finds it easier to copy pictures than to paint them, and easier to *see* than to copy them, takes infinite pains to gain admission to all the great collections, lounges from one auction room to another, and writes newspaper criticisms on the Fine Arts——. Such was not Correggio; he saw and felt for himself; he was of no school, but had his own world of art to create. That image of truth and beauty, which existed in his mind, he was forced to construct for himself, without rules or models. As it had arisen in his mind from the contemplation of nature, so he could only hope to embody it to others, by the imitation of nature. We can conceive the work growing under his hands by slow and patient touches, approaching nearer to perfection, softened into finer grace, gaining strength from delicacy, and at last reflecting the pure image of nature on the canvass.—Such is always the true progress of art; such are the necessary means by which the greatest works of every kind have been produced. They have been the effect of power gathering strength from exercise, and warmth from its own impulse—stimulated to fresh efforts by conscious success, and by the surprise and strangeness of a new world of beauty, opening to the delighted imagination. The triumphs of art were victories over the difficulties of art; the prodigies of genius, the result of that strength which had grappled with nature. Titian copied even a plant or a piece of common drapery from the objects themselves; and Raphael is known to have made elaborate studies of the principal heads in his pictures. All the great painters of this period were thoroughly grounded in the first principles of their art; had learned to copy a face, a hand, or an eye, and had acquired patience to finish a single figure, before they undertook to paint extensive compositions. They knew that though Fame is represented with her head above the clouds, her feet rest upon the earth. Genius can only have its full scope where, though much may have been done, more remains to do; where models exist chiefly to shew the deficiencies of

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art, and where the perfect idea is left to be filled up in the painter's imagination. When once the stimulus of novelty and of original exertion is wanting, generations repose on what has been done for them by their predecessors, as individuals, after a certain period, rest satisfied with the knowledge they have already acquired.

To proceed to the supposed advantages to be derived, in a pecuniary point of view, from the public patronage of the arts. It in this respect unfortunately defeats itself; for it multiplies its objects faster than it can satisfy their claims; and raises up a swarm of competitors for the prize of genius from the dregs of idleness and dulness. The real patron is anxious to reward merit, not to encourage gratuitous pretensions to it; to see that the man of genius *takes no detriment*, that another Wilson is not left to perish for want;—not to propagate the breed, for that he knows to be impossible. But there are some persons who think it as essential to the interests of art, to keep up ‘an airy of children,’—the young fry of embryo candidates for fame,—as others think it essential to the welfare of the kingdom to preserve the spawn of the herring fisheries. In general, public, that is, indiscriminate patronage is, and can be nothing better than a species of intellectual seduction; by administering provocatives to vanity and avarice, it is leading astray the youth of this nation by fallacious hopes, which can scarcely ever be realized. It is beating up for raw dependants, sending out into the highways for the halt, the lame, and the blind, and making a scramble among a set of idle boys for prizes of the first, second, and third class, like those we make among children for gingerbread toys. True patronage does not consist in ostentatious professions of high keeping, and promiscuous intercourse with the arts. At the same time, the good that might be done by private taste and benevolence is in a great measure defeated. The moment that a few individuals of discernment and liberal spirit become members of a public body, they are no longer anything more than parts of a machine, which is usually wielded at will by some officious, overweening pretender; their good-sense and good-nature are lost in a mass of ignorance and presumption; their names only serve to reflect credit on proceedings in which they have no share, and which are determined on by a majority of persons who have no interest in the arts but what arises from the importance attached to them by regular organisation, and no opinions but what are dictated to them by some self-constituted judge. Whenever vanity and self-importance are (as in general they must be) the governing principles of systems of public patronage, there is an end at once of all candour and directness of conduct. Their decisions are before the public: and the individuals who take the lead in these decisions are responsible for them. They

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have therefore to manage the public opinion, in order to secure that of their own body. Hence, instead of giving a firm, manly, and independent tone to that opinion, they make it their business to watch all its caprices, and follow it in every casual turning. They dare not give their sanction to sterling merit, struggling with difficulties, but take advantage of its success, to reflect credit on their own reputation for sagacity. Their taste is a servile dependant on their vanity, and their patronage has an air of pauperism about it. They neglect or treat with insult the favourite whom they suspect of having fallen off in the opinion of the public; but, if he is able to recover his ground without their assistance, are ready to heap their mercenary bounties upon those of others, greet him with friendly congratulations, and share his triumph with him. Perhaps the only public patronage which was ever really useful to the arts, or worthy of them, was that which they received first in Greece, and afterwards in Italy, from the religious institutions of the country; when the artist felt himself, as it were, a servant at the altar; when his hand gave a visible form to Gods or Heroes, Angels or Apostles; and when the enthusiasm of genius was exalted by mingling with the flame of national devotion. The artist was not here degraded, by being made the dependant on the caprice of wealth or fashion, but felt himself at once the servant and the benefactor of the public. He had to embody, by the highest efforts of his art, subjects which were sacred to the imagination and feelings of the spectators; there was a common link, a mutual sympathy between them in their common faith.<sup>1</sup> Every other mode of patronage, but that which arises, either from the general institutions and manners of a people, or from the real unaffected taste of individuals, must, we conceive, be illegitimate, corrupted in its source, and either ineffectual or injurious to its professed object. Positive encouragements and rewards will not make an honest man, or a great artist. The assumed familiarity and condescending goodness of patrons and vice-patrons will serve to intoxicate rather than to sober the mind,

<sup>1</sup> Of the effect of *the authority* of the subject of a composition, in suspending the exercise of personal taste and feeling in the spectators, we have a striking instance in our own country, where this cause must, from collateral circumstances, operate less forcibly. Mr. West's pictures would not be tolerated but from the respect inspired by the subjects of which he treats. When a young lady and her mother, the wife and daughter of a clergyman, are told, that a gawky ill-favoured youth is the beloved disciple of Christ, and that a tall, starched figure of a woman visible near him is the Virgin Mary, whatever they might have thought before, they can no more refrain from shedding tears than if they had seen the very persons recorded in sacred history. It is not the picture, but the associations connected with it, that produce the effect. Just as if the same young lady and her mother had been told, 'that is the Emperor Alexander,' they would say, '*what a handsome man!*' or if they were shown the Prince Regent, would exclaim '*how elegant!*'

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and a card to dinner in Cleveland-row or Portland-place will have a tendency to divert the student's thoughts from his morning's work, rather than to rivet them upon it. The device by which a celebrated painter has represented the Virgin teaching the infant Christ to read by pointing with a butterfly to the letters of the alphabet, has not been thought a very wise one. Correggio is the most melancholy instance on record of the want of a proper encouragement of the arts: but a golden shower of patronage, tempting as that which fell into the lap of his own Danae, and dropping prize medals and epic mottoes, would not produce another Correggio!

We shall conclude with offering some remarks on the question, Whether Academies and Institutions must not be supposed to assist the progress of the fine arts, by promoting a wider taste for them.

In general, it must happen in the first stages of the arts, that as none but those who had a natural genius for them would attempt to practise them, so none but those who had a natural taste for them would pretend to judge of or criticise them. This must be an incalculable advantage to the man of true genius; for it is no other than the privilege of being tried by his peers. In an age when connoisseurship had not become a fashion; when religion, war, and intrigue occupied the time and thoughts of the great, only those minds of superior refinement would be led to notice the works of art who had a real sense of their excellence; and, in giving way to the powerful bent of his own genius, the painter was most likely to consult the taste of his judges. He had not to deal with pretenders to taste, through vanity, affectation, and idleness. He had to appeal to the higher faculties of the soul,—to that deep and innate sensibility to truth and beauty, which required only fit objects to have its enthusiasm excited,—and to that independent strength of mind, which, in the midst of ignorance and barbarism, hailed and fostered genius wherever it met with it. Titian was patronised by Charles V. Count Castiglione was the friend of Raphael. These were true patrons and true critics; and, as there were no others (for the world, in general, merely looked on and wondered), there can be little doubt that such a period of dearth of factitious patronage would be most favourable to the full development of the greatest talents, and to the attainment of the highest excellence.

The diffusion of taste is not, then, the same thing as the improvement of taste; but it is only the former of these objects that is promoted by public institutions and other artificial means. Thus the number of candidates for fame, and pretenders to criticism, is increased beyond all calculation, while the quantity of genius and feeling remain

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much the same as before; with these disadvantages, that the man of original genius is often lost among the crowd of competitors who would never have become such, but from encouragement and example, and that the voice of the few whom nature intended for judges, is apt to be drowned in the noisy and forward suffrages of shallow smatterers in taste. The principle of universal suffrage, however applicable to matters of government, which concern the common feelings and common interests of society, is by no means applicable to matters of taste, which can only be decided upon by the most refined understandings. It is throwing down the barriers which separate knowledge and feeling from ignorance and vulgarity, and proclaiming a Bartholomew-fair-show of the fine arts—

‘ And fools rush in where angels fear to tread.’

The public taste is, therefore, necessarily vitiated, in proportion as it is public; it is lowered with every infusion it receives of common opinion. The greater the number of judges, the less capable must they be of judging, for the addition to the number of good ones will always be small, while the multitude of bad ones is endless, and thus the decay of art may be said to be the necessary consequence of its progress.

Can there be a greater confirmation of these remarks than to look at the texture of that assemblage of select critics, who every year visit the exhibition at Somerset-house from all parts of the metropolis of this united kingdom? Is it at all wonderful that for such a succession of connoisseurs, such a collection of works of art should be provided; where the eye in vain seeks relief from the glitter of the frames in the glare of the pictures; where vermillion cheeks make vermillion lips look pale; where the merciless splendour of the painter’s pallet puts nature out of countenance; and where the unmeaning grimace of fashion and folly is almost the only variety in the wide dazzling waste of colour. Indeed, the great error of British art has hitherto been a desire to produce popular effect by the cheapest and most obvious means, and at the expence of every thing else;—to lose all the delicacy and variety of nature in one undistinguished bloom of florid health, and all precision, truth, and refinement of character in the same harmless mould of smiling, self-complacent insipidity,

‘ Pleased with itself, that all the world can please.’

It is probable that in all that stream of idleness and curiosity which flows in, hour after hour, and day after day, to the richly hung apartments of Somerset-house, there are not fifty persons to be found who

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can really distinguish 'a Guido from a Daub,' or who would recognise a work of the most refined genius from the most common and everyday performance. Come, then, ye banks of Wapping, and classic haunts of Ratcliffe-highway, and join thy fields, blithe Tothill—let the postchaises, gay with oaken boughs, be put in requisition for school-boys from Eton and Harrow, and school-girls from Hackney and Mile-end,—and let a jury be empannelled to decide on the merits of Raphael, and——. The verdict will be infallible. We remember having been formerly a good deal amused with seeing a smart, handsome-looking Quaker lad, standing before a picture of Christ as the saviour of the world, with a circle of young female friends around him, and a newspaper in his hand, out of which he read to his admiring auditors a criticism on the picture ascribing to it every perfection, human and divine.—Now, in truth, the colouring was any thing but solemn, the drawing any thing but grand, the expression any thing but sublime. The friendly critic had, however, bedaubed it so with praise, that it was not easy to gainsay its wondrous excellence. In fact, one of the worst consequences of the establishment of academies, &c. is, that the rank and station of the painter throw a lustre round his pictures, which imposes completely on the herd of spectators, and makes it a kind of treason against the art, for any one to speak his mind freely, or detect the imposture. If, indeed, the election to title and academic honours went by merit, this might form a kind of clue or standard for the public to decide justly upon:—but we have heard that genius and taste determine precedence there, almost as little as at court; and that modesty and talent stand very little chance indeed with interest, cabal, impudence, and cunning. The purity or liberality of professional decisions cannot, therefore, in such cases be expected to counteract the tendency which an appeal to the public has to lower the standard of taste. The artist, to succeed, must let himself down to the level of his judges, for he cannot raise them up to his own. The highest efforts of genius, in every walk of art, can never be properly understood by mankind in general: there are numberless beauties and truths which lie far beyond their comprehension. It is only as refinement or sublimity are blended with other qualities of a more obvious and common nature, that they pass current with the world. Common sense, which has been sometimes appealed to as the criterion of taste, is nothing but the common capacity, applied to common facts and feelings; but it neither is, nor pretends to be, the judge of any thing else.—To suppose that it can really appreciate the excellence of works of high art, is as absurd as to suppose that it could produce them.

Taste is the highest degree of sensibility, or the impression made on

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the most cultivated and sensible of minds, as genius is the result of the highest powers both of feeling and invention. It may be objected, that the public taste is capable of gradual improvement, because, in the end, the public do justice to works of the greatest merit. This is a mistake. The reputation ultimately, and often slowly affixed to works of genius is stamped upon them by authority, not by popular consent or the common sense of the world. We imagine that the admiration of the works of celebrated men has become common, because the admiration of their names has become so. But does not every ignorant connoisseur pretend the same veneration, and talk with the same vapid assurance of Michael Angelo, though he has never seen even a copy of any of his pictures, as if he had studied them accurately,—merely because Sir Joshua Reynolds has praised him? Is Milton more popular now than when the *Paradise Lost* was first published? Or does he not rather owe his reputation to the judgment of a few persons in every successive period, accumulating in his favour, and overpowering by its weight the public indifference? Why is Shakspeare popular? Not from his refinement of character or sentiment, so much as from his power of telling a story, the variety and invention, the tragic catastrophe and broad farce of his plays. Spenser is not yet understood. Does not Boccaccio pass to this day for a writer of ribaldry, because his jests and lascivious tales were all that caught the vulgar ear, while the story of the Falcon is forgotten!

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

*The Champion.*

October 2, 1814.

SIR,—I beg to offer one or two explanations with respect to the article on the subject of public institutions for the promotion of the Fine Arts, which does not appear to me to have been exactly understood by 'A STUDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY.' The whole drift of that article is to explode the visionary theory, that art may go on in an infinite series of imitation and improvement. This theory has not a single fact or argument to support it. All the highest efforts of art originate in the imitation of nature, and end there. No imitation of others can carry us beyond this point, or ever enable us to reach it. The imitation of the works of genius facilitates the acquisition of a certain degree of excellence, but weakens and distracts while it facilitates, and renders the acquisition of the highest degree of excellence impossible. Wherever the greatest individual genius has been exerted upon the finest models of nature, there the greatest works of art have been produced,—the Greek statues and the Italian pictures. There is

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no substitute in art for nature ; in proportion as we remove from this original source, we dwindle into mediocrity and flimsiness, and whenever the artificial and systematic assistance afforded to genius becomes extreme, it overlays it altogether. We cannot make use of other men's minds, any more than of their limbs.<sup>1</sup> Art is not science, nor is the progress made in the one ever like the progress made in the other. The one is retrograde for the very same reason that the other is progressive ; because science is mechanical, and art is not, and in proportion as we rely on mechanical means, we lose the essence. Is there a single exception to this rule ? The worst artists in the world are the modern Italians, who lived in the midst of the finest works of art :—the persons least like the Greek sculptors are the modern French painters, who copy nothing but the antique. Velasquez might be improved by a pilgrimage to the Vatican, but if it had been his morning's lounge, it would have ruined him. Michael Angelo, the cartoons of Leonardi da Vinci, and the antique, your correspondent tells us, produced Raphael. Why have they produced no second Raphael ? What produced Michael Angelo, Leonardi da Vinci, and the antique ? Surely not Michael Angelo, Leonardi da Vinci, and the antique ! If Sir Joshua Reynolds would never have observed a certain expression in nature, if he had not seen it in Correggio, it is tolerably certain that he would never execute it so well ; and in fact, though Sir Joshua was largely indebted to Correggio, yet his imitations are not equal to the originals. The two little boys in Correggio's *Danae* are worth all the children Sir Joshua ever painted : and the Hymen in the same picture, (with leave be it spoken,) is worth all his works put together.—But the Student of the Royal Academy thinks that Carlo Maratti, and Raphael Mengs are only exceptions to the common rule of progressive improvement in the art. If these are the exceptions, where are the examples ? If we are to credit him, and it would be uncivil not to do it, they are to be found in the present students of the Royal Academy, whom, he says, it would be unreasonable to confound with such minds as those of Carlo Maratti and Raphael Mengs. Be it so. This is a point to be decided by time.

The whole question was at once decided by the person who said that '*to imitate the Iliad, was not to imitate Homer.*' After this has once been stated, it is quite in vain to argue the point farther. The idea of piling art on art, and heaping excellence on excellence, is a mere

<sup>1</sup> Occasional assistance may be derived from both, but, in general, we must trust to our own strength. We cannot hope to become rich by living upon alms. Constant assistance is the worst incumbrance. The accumulation of models, and erection of universal schools for art, improves the genius of the student much in the same way that the encouragement of night-cellars and gin-shops improves the health and morals of the people.

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fable; and we may very safely say, that the frontispiece of all such pretended institutions and academies for the promotion of the fine arts, founded on this principle, and ‘pointing to the skies,’ should be—

‘Like a tall bully, lifts the head, and lies.’

Absurd as this theory is, it flatters our vanity and our indolence, and these are two great points gained. It is gratifying to suppose that art may have gone on from the beginning, reposing upon art, like the Indian elephant and the tortoise, that it has improved, and will still go on improving, without the trouble of going back to nature. By these theorists, Nature is always kept in the background, or does not even terminate the vista in their prospects. She is a mistress too importunate, and who requires too great sacrifices from the effeminacy of modern amateurs. They will only see her in company, or by proxy, and are as much afraid of being reduced to their shifts with her in private, as *Tattle in Love for Love* was afraid of being left alone with a pretty girl.

I can only recollect one other thing to reply to. Your correspondent objects to my having said, ‘All the great painters of this period were thoroughly grounded in the first principles of their art; had learned to copy a head, a hand, or an eye,’ &c. All this knowledge of detail he attributes to academical instruction, and quotes Sir Joshua Reynolds, who says of himself—‘Not having had the advantage of an early academical education, I never had that facility in drawing the naked figure which an artist ought to have.’ First, I might answer, that the drawing from casts can never assist the student in copying the face, the eye, or the extremities; and that it was only of service in the knowledge of the trunk, and the general proportions, which are comparatively lost in the style of English art, which is not naked, but clothed. Secondly, I would say, with respect to Sir Joshua, that his inability to draw the naked figure arose from his not having been accustomed to draw it; and that drawing from the antique would not have enabled either him or any one else to draw from the naked figure. The difficulty of copying from nature, or in other words of doing any thing that has not been done before, or that is worth doing, is that of combining many ideas at once, or of reconciling things in motion: whereas in copying from the antique, you have only to copy still life, and in proportion as you get a knack at the one, you disqualify yourself for the other.

As to what your correspondent adds of painting and poetry being the same thing, it is an old story which I do not believe. But who would ever think of setting up a school of poetry? Byshe’s *Art of Poetry* and the *Gradus ad Parnassum* are a jest. Royal Academies and

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British Institutions are to painting, what Byshe's Art of Poetry and the *Gradus ad Parnassum* are to the 'sister art.' Poetry, as it becomes artificial, becomes bad, instead of good—the poetry of words, instead of things. Milton is the only poet who gave to borrowed materials the force of originality. I am, Sir, Your humble Servant, W. H.

## CHARACTER OF SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

*The Champion.*

October 30 and November 6, 1814.

THE authority of Sir Joshua Reynolds, both from his example and instructions, has had, and still continues to have, a considerable influence on the state of art in this country. That influence has been on the whole unquestionably beneficial in itself, as well as highly creditable to the rare talents and elegant mind of Sir Joshua; for it has raised the art of painting from the lowest state of degradation, of dry, meagre, lifeless inanity, to something at least respectable, and bearing an affinity to the rough strength and bold spirit of the national character. Whether the same implicit deference to his authority, which has helped to advance the art thus far, may not, among other causes, limit and retard its future progress? Whether there are not certain original errors, both in his principles and practice, which, the farther they are proceeded in, the farther they will lead us from the truth? Whether there is not a systematic bias from the right line by which alone we can arrive at the goal of the highest perfection?—are questions well worth considering. From the great and substantial merits of the late president, we have as little the inclination as the power to detract. But we certainly think that they have been sometimes over-rated from the partiality of friends and from the influence of fashion. However necessary and useful the ebullitions of public or private enthusiasm may be to counteract the common prejudices against new claims to reputation, and to lift rising genius to its just rank, there is a time when, having accomplished its end, our zeal may be suffered to subside into discretion, and when it becomes as proper to restrain our admiration as it was before to give a loose to it. It is only by having undergone this double ordeal that reputation can ever be established on a solid basis—that popularity becomes fame.

We shall begin with his merits as an artist. There is one error which we wish to correct at setting out, because we think it important. There is not a greater or more unaccountable mistake than the sup-

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position that Sir Joshua Reynolds owed his success or excellence in his profession, to his having been the first who introduced into this country more general principles of the art, and who raised portrait to the dignity of history from the low drudgery of copying the peculiarities, meannesses, and details of individual nature, which was all that had been attempted by his immediate predecessors. This is so far from being true, that the very reverse is the fact. If Sir Joshua did not give these details and peculiarities so much as might be wished, those who went before him did not give them at all. Those pretended general principles of the art, which, it is said, 'alone give value and dignity to it,' had been pushed to their extremest absurdity before his time; and it was in getting rid of the mechanical systematic monotony and *middle forms*, by the help of which Lely, Kneller, Hudson, the French painters, and others, carried on their manufactories of history and face painting, and in returning (as far as he did return) to the truth and force of individual nature, that the secret both of his fame and fortune lay. The pedantic, servile race of artists, whom Reynolds superseded, had carried the abstract principle of improving on nature to such a degree of refinement, that they left it out altogether; and confounded all the varieties and irregularities of form, feature, character, expression or attitude in the same artificial mould of fancied grace and fashionable insipidity. The portraits of Kneller, for example, seem all to have been turned in a machine; the eye-brows are arched as if by a compass; the mouth curled, and the chin dimpled, the head turned on one side, and the hands placed in the same affected position. He thought that beauty and perfection were *one* and he very consistently reduced this principle to practice. The portraits of this mannerist, therefore, are as like one another as the dresses which were then in fashion; and have the same 'dignity and value' as the full-bottomed wigs which graced their originals. The superiority of Reynolds consisted in his being varied and natural, instead of being artificial and uniform. The spirit, grace, or dignity which he added to his portraits, he borrowed from nature, and not from the ambiguous quackery of rules. His feeling of truth and nature was too strong to permit him to adopt the unmeaning style of Kneller and Hudson; but his logical acuteness was not such as to enable him to detect the verbal fallacies and speculative absurdities which he had learned from Richardson and Coppel; and, from some defects in his own practice, he was led to confound negligence with grandeur. But of this hereafter.—

Sir Joshua Reynolds owed his vast superiority over his contemporaries to incessant practice, and habitual attention to nature, to quick organic sensibility, to considerable power of observation, and

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still greater taste in perceiving and availing himself of those excellences of others which lay within his own walk of art. We can by no means look upon Sir Joshua as having a claim to the first rank of genius; his own account of genius is a sufficient proof of this, for every man, in reasoning on the faculties of human nature, describes the process of his own mind. He would hardly have been a great painter if other greater painters had not lived before him. He would not have given a first impulse to the art, nor did he advance any part of it beyond the point where he found it. He did not present any new view of nature, nor is he to be placed in the same class with those who did. Even in colour, his pallet was spread for him by the old Masters, and his eye imbibed its full perception of depth and harmony of tone, from the Dutch and Venetian schools, rather than from nature. His early pictures are poor and flimsy. He indeed learned to see the finer qualities of nature through the works of art, which he, perhaps, might never have discovered in nature itself. He became rich by the accumulation of borrowed wealth, and his genius was the offspring of taste. He combined and applied the materials of others to his own purpose, with admirable success; he was an industrious compiler, or skilful translator, not an original inventor in art. The art would remain, in all its essential elements, just where it is, if Sir Joshua had never lived. He has supplied the industry of future plagiarists with no new materials. But it has been well observed, that the value of every work of art, as well as the genius of the artist, depends, not more on the degree of excellence, than on the degree of originality displayed in it. Sir Joshua, however, was perhaps the most original imitator that ever appeared in the world; and the reason of this, in a great measure, was, that he was compelled to combine what he saw in art with what he saw in nature, which was constantly before him. The portrait-painter is, in this respect, much less liable than the historical painter to deviate into the extremes of manner and affectation; for he cannot discard nature altogether, under the excuse that *she only puts him out*. He must meet her, face to face; and if he is not incorrigible, he will see something there that cannot fail to be of service to him. Another circumstance which must have been favourable to Sir Joshua was, that though not the originator *in point of time*, he was the first Englishman who transplanted the higher excellences of his profession into his own country, and had the merit, if not of an inventor, of a reformer of the art. His mode of painting had the graces of novelty in the age and country in which he lived; and he had, therefore, all the stimulus to exertion, which arose from the enthusiastic applause of his contemporaries, and from a desire to expand and refine the taste of the public.

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To an eye for colour and for effects of light and shade, Sir Joshua united a strong perception of individual character,—a lively feeling of the quaint and grotesque in expression, and great mastery of execution. He had comparatively little knowledge of drawing, either as it regarded proportion or form.<sup>1</sup> The beauty of some of his female faces and figures arises almost entirely from their softness and fleshiness. His pencil wanted firmness and precision. The expression, even of his best portraits, seldom implies either lofty or impassioned intellect or delicate sensibility. He also wanted grace, if grace requires simplicity. The mere negation of stiffness and formality is not grace; for looseness and distortion are not grace. His favourite attitudes are not easy and natural, but the affectation of ease and nature. They are violent deviations from a right line. Many of the figures in his fancy-pieces are placed in postures in which they could not remain for an instant without extreme difficulty and awkwardness. We might instance the *Girl drawing with a Pencil*, and some others.<sup>2</sup> His portraits are his best pictures, and of these his portraits of men are the best; his pictures of children are the next in value. He had fine subjects for the former, from the masculine sense and originality of character of many of the persons whom he painted; and he had also a great advantage (as far as practice went) in painting a number of persons of every rank and description. Some of the finest and most interesting are those of Dr. Johnson, Goldsmith (which is, however, too much a mere sketch), Baretti, Dr. Burney, John Hunter, and the inimitable portrait of Bishop Newton. The elegant simplicity of character, expression, and drawing, preserved throughout the last picture, even to the attitude and mode of handling, discover the true genius of a painter. We also remember to have seen a print of Thomas Warton, than which nothing could be more characteristic or more natural. These were all Reynolds's intimate acquaintances, and it could not be said of them that they were men of 'no mark or likelihood.' Their traits

<sup>1</sup> This distinction has not been sufficiently attended to. Mr. West, for example, has considerable knowledge of drawing, as it relates to proportion, to the anatomical measurements of the human body. He has not the least conception of elegance or grandeur of form. The one is matter of mechanical knowledge, the other of taste and feeling. Rubens was deficient in the anatomical measurements, as well as in the marking of the muscles: but he had as fine an eye as possible for what may be called *the picturesque* in form, both in the composition of his figures and in the particular parts. In all that relates to the expression of motion, that is, to ease, freedom, and elasticity of form, he was unrivalled. He was as superior to Mr. West in his power of drawing, as in his power of colouring.—Correggio's proportions are said to have been often incorrect: but his feeling of beauty, and grace of outline, was of the most exquisite kind.

<sup>2</sup> Our references are generally made to pictures in the late exhibition of Sir Joshua's works in the British Gallery.

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had probably sunk deep into the artist's mind; he painted them as pure studies from nature, copying the real image existing before him, with all its known characteristic peculiarities; and, with as much wisdom as good-nature, sacrificing the graces on the altar of friendship. They are downright portraits, and nothing more. What if he had painted them on the theory of middle forms, or pounded their features together in the same metaphysical mortar? Mr. Westall might just as well have painted them. They would have been of no more value than his own pictures of Mr. Tomkins, the penman, or Mrs. Robinson, who is painted with a hat and feather, or Mrs. Billington, who is painted as St. Cecilia, or than the Prince of Wales and Duke of York, or the portraits of Sir George and Lady Beaumont. Would the artist in this case have conferred the same benefit on the public, or have added as much to the stock of our ideas, as by giving us *fac-similes* of the most interesting characters of the time, with whom we seem, from his representations of them, to be almost as well acquainted as if we had known them, and to remember their persons as well as their writings? Yet we would rather have seen Johnson, or Goldsmith, or Burke, than their portraits. This shows that the effect of the pictures would not have been the worse, if they had been the more finished and more detailed: for there is nothing so true, either to the details or to the general effect, as nature. The only celebrated person of this period whom we have seen is Mr. Sheridan, whose face, we have no hesitation in saying, contains a great deal more, and is better worth seeing, than Sir Joshua's picture of him.

In his portraits of women, on the contrary (with very few exceptions), Sir Joshua appears to have consulted either the vanity of his employers or his own fanciful theory. They have not the look of individual nature, nor have they, to compensate the want of this, either peculiar elegance of form, refinement of expression, delicacy of complexion, or gracefulness of manner. Vandyke's attitudes have been complained of as stiff and confined. But there is a medium between primness and hoydening. Reynolds, to avoid the former defect, has fallen into the contrary extreme of negligence and contortion. His female figures which aim at gentility, are twisted into that serpentine line, the idea of which he ridiculed so much in Hogarth. Indeed, Sir Joshua, in his Discourses (see his account of Correggio), speaks of grace as if it were nearly allied to affectation. Grace signifies that which is pleasing and natural in the posture and motions of the human form, as Beauty is more properly applied to the form itself. That which is stiff, inanimate, and without motion, cannot, therefore, be graceful; but, to suppose that a figure, to be graceful, need only be put into some languishing or extravagant posture, is to mistake

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flutter and affectation for ease and elegance. Sir Joshua seems more than once (both theoretically and practically) to have borrowed his idea of positive excellence from a negation of the opposite defect. His tastes led him to reject the faults which he had observed in others; but he had not always power to realise his own idea of perfection, or to ascertain precisely in what it consisted. His colouring also wanted that purity, delicacy, and transparent smoothness which gives such an exquisite charm to Vandyke's women. Vandyke's portraits (mostly of English women) in the Louvre, have a cool, refreshing air about them, a look of simplicity and modesty even in the very tone, which forms a fine contrast to the voluptuous glow and mellow golden lustre of Titian's Italian women. There is a quality of flesh-colour in Vandyke, which is to be found in no other painter, neither in Titian, Rubens, nor Rembrandt; nor is it in Reynolds, for he had nothing which was not taken from those three. It exactly conveys the idea of the soft, smooth, sliding, continuous, delicately varied surface of the skin. Correggio approached nearer to it, though his principle of light and shade was totally different. The objects in Vandyke have the least possible difference of light and shade, and are presented to the eye without being reflected through any other medium. It is this extreme purity and clearness of tone, together with the elegance and precision of his particular forms,<sup>1</sup> that places Vandyke in the first rank of portrait-painters. As Reynolds had not his defects, he had not his excellences. We accidentally saw the late Lady Mount-Joy at the exhibition of Sir Joshua's works in Pall-mall: nor could we help contrasting the dazzling clearness of complexion, the delicacy and distinctness of the form of the features, with the half made-up and faded beauties which hung on the walls, and which comparatively resembled paste figures, smeared over with paint. We doubt whether the same effect would have been produced in a fine collection of Vandyke's. In the gallery of Blenheim, there is a family picture of the Duchess of Buckingham with her children, which is a pure mirror of fashion. The picture produces the same sort of respect and silence as if the spectator had been introduced into a family circle of the highest rank, at a period when rank was a greater distinction than it is at present. The delicate attention and mild solicitude of the mother are admirable, but two of the children surpass description. The one is a young girl of nine or ten, who looks as if 'the winds of heaven had not been permitted to visit her face too roughly'; she stands before her mother in all the pride of childish self-importance, and studied display of artificial prettiness, with a

<sup>1</sup> Mengs speaks feelingly of 'the little varieties of form in the details of the portraits of Vandyke.'

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consciousness that the least departure from strict propriety or decorum will be instantly detected; the other is a little round-faced chubby boy, who stands quite at his ease behind his mother's chair, with a fine rosy glow of health in his cheeks, through which the blood is seen circulating. It was like seeing the objects reflected in a glass. The picture of the late Duke and Duchess of Marlborough and their children, in the same room, painted by Sir Joshua, appears coarse and tawdry when compared with 'the soft precision of the clear Vandyke.'<sup>1</sup>

Sir Joshua's children are among his *chef d'œuvres*. The faces of children have in general that want of precision of outline, that prominence of relief, and strong contrast of colour, which were peculiarly adapted to his style of painting. The arch simplicity of expression, and the grotesque character which he has given to the heads of his children, were, however, borrowed from Correggio. Sir Joshua has only repeated the same idea *ad infinitum*, and has, besides, caricatured it. It has been said that his children were unrivalled. Titian's, Raphael's, and Correggio's were much superior. Those of Rubens and Poussin were at least equal. If any one should hesitate as to the last painter in particular, we would refer them to the picture (at Lord Grosvenor's) of the children paying adoration to the infant Christ, or to the children drinking in the picture of Moses striking the rock. Our making these comparisons or giving these preferences is not, we conceive, any disparagement to Sir Joshua. Did we not think highly of him, we might well blush to make them. His Puck and the single figure of the Infant Hercules are his best. The colour and execution are most masterly in both, and the character is no less admirably preserved. Many of those to which his friends have suggested historical titles are mere common portraits or casual studies. Thus we cannot agree with Mr. Sotheby in his description of the infant Jupiter and the infant Samuel. The one is a sturdy young gentleman sitting in a doubtful posture without its swaddling-clothes, and the other an innocent little child, saying its prayers at the bed's feet. They have nothing to do with Jupiter or Samuel, the heathen god or the Hebrew prophet.<sup>2</sup> The same objec-

<sup>1</sup> The large picture of the Pembroke family at Wilton is a finer commentary on the age of chivalry than Mr. Burke's Reflections.

<sup>2</sup> Where boundless genius brooding o'er the whole,  
Stamps e'en on babes sublimity of soul,  
Whether, while terror crowns Jove's infant brow,  
Before the god-head awed Olympus bow:  
Or while from heav'n celestial grace descends,  
Meek on his knees the infant Samuel bends,  
Lifts his clasp'd hands, and as he glows in prayer,  
Fixes in awful trance his eye on air.

*Mr. Sotheby's poetical epistle to Sir G. Beaumont.*

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tion will apply to many of his fancy-pieces and historical compositions. There is often no connection between the picture and the subject but the name. Sir Joshua himself (as it appears from his biographers) had no idea of a subject in painting them, till some ignorant and officious admirer undertook to supply the deficiency. What can be more trifling than giving the portrait of Kitty Fisher the mock-heroic title of Cleopatra? Even the celebrated Iphigenia (beautiful as she is, and prodigal of her charms) does not answer to the idea of the story. In drawing the naked figure, Sir Joshua's want of truth and firmness of outline became more apparent; and his mode of laying on his colours, which, in the face and extremities, was relieved and broken by the abrupt inequalities of surface and variety of tints in each part, produced a degree of heaviness and opacity in the larger masses of flesh-colour which can indeed only be avoided by extreme delicacy, or extreme lightness of execution.

Shall we speak the truth at once? In our opinion, Sir Joshua did not possess either that high imagination, or those strong feelings, without which no painter can become a poet in his art. His larger historical compositions have been generally allowed to be most liable to objection, considered in a critical point of view. We shall not attempt to judge them by scientific or technical rules, but make one or two observations on the character and feeling displayed in them. The highest subject which Sir Joshua has attempted was the *Count Ugolino*, and it was, as might be expected from the circumstances, a total failure. He had, it seems, painted a study of an old beggarman's head; and some person, who must have known as little of painting as of poetry, persuaded the unsuspecting artist, that it was the exact expression of Dante's Count Ugolino, one of the most grand, terrific, and appalling characters in modern fiction. Reynolds, who knew nothing of the matter but what he was told, took his good fortune for granted, and only extended his canvass to admit the rest of the figures, who look very much like apprentices hired to sit for the occasion from some neighbouring workshop. There is one pleasing and natural figure of a little boy kneeling at his father's feet, but it has no relation to the supposed story. The attitude and expression of Count Ugolino himself are what the artist intended them to be till they were pampered into something else by the officious vanity of friends—those of a common mendicant at the corner of a street, waiting patiently for some charitable donation. There is all the difference between what the picture is and what it ought to be, that there is between Crabbe and Dante. The imagination of the painter took refuge in a parish work-house, instead of ascending the steps of the Tower of Famine. The hero of Dante is a lofty, high-minded,

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and unprincipled Italian nobleman, who had betrayed his country to the enemy, and who, as a punishment for his crime, is shut up with his four sons in the dungeon of the citadel, where he shortly finds the doors barred against him, and food withheld. He in vain watches with eager feverish eye the opening of the door at the accustomed hour, and his looks turn to stone; his children one by one drop down dead at his feet; he is seized with blindness, and, in the agony of his despair, he gropes on his knees after them,

——‘ Calling each by name  
For three days after they were dead.’

Even in the other world he is represented with the same fierce, dauntless, unrelenting character, ‘ gnawing the skull of his adversary, his fell repast.’ The subject of the Laocoon is scarcely equal to that described by Dante. The horror *there* is physical and momentary; in the other, the imagination fills up the long, obscure, dreary void of despair, and joins its unutterable pangs to the loud cries of nature. What is there in the picture to convey the ghastly horrors of the scene, or the mighty energy of soul with which they are borne? <sup>1</sup> Nothing! Yet Dr. Warton, who has related this story so well; Burke, who wrote that fine description of the effects of famine; Goldsmith, and all his other friends, were satisfied with his success. Why then should not Sir Joshua be so too?—Because he was bound to understand the language which he used, as well as that which was given him to translate.

The Cardinal Beaufort is a fine display of rich mellow colouring; and there is something gentlemanly and Shakspearian in the King and the attendant Nobleman. At the same time, we think the expression of the Cardinal himself is too much one of physical horror, a canine gnashing of the teeth, like a man strangled. This is not the best style of history. The picture of *Macbeth* is full of wild and grotesque images; and the apparatus of the witches contains a very elaborate and well-arranged inventory of dreadful objects. The idea of *Macbeth* seems to be taken from the passage in Shakspeare—‘ Why stands *Macbeth* thus amazedly?’ The poet has in this taunting question of the witches laid open the inmost movements of his mind. Why has the painter turned his face from us? *Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy* is, to say the best, a very indifferent

<sup>1</sup> Why does not the British Institution, instead of patronising pictures of the battle of Waterloo, of red coats, foolish faces, and labels of victory, offer a prize for a picture of the subject of Ugolino that shall be equal to the group of the Laocoon? *That* would be the way to do something, if there is anything to be done by such patronage.

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performance. He appears to be 'grinning for a wager.' We cannot conceive how any two ladies should contend for such a prize, nor how he should be divided between them. 'The muse of comedy is as childish and insipid as the muse of tragedy is cold and repulsive. The whole is mere affectation without an idea. Mrs. Siddons, as the *Tragic Muse*, is an improvement on the same false style. It is not Mrs. Siddons, nor is it the tragic muse, but something between both, and neither. We would ask those who pretend to admire this composition, whether they think it would convey to any one who had never seen the original, the least idea of the power of that wonderful actress in any one of her characters, and as it relates to the expression of countenance alone? That it gives an idea of any thing finer, is what we cannot readily make up our minds to. We ought perhaps in fairness to close these remarks with a confession of our weakness.—There was one picture which affected us more than all the rest, because it seemed to convey the true feeling of the story, and that was the picture of the Children in the Wood.

To return once more to Sir Joshua's general character as a painter. He has been compared to Raphael, Titian, Rubens, Vandyke, Rembrandt, and Correggio, and said to unite all their excellences. It will be well to qualify this praise. He had little congeniality of mind, except with the two last, more particularly Rembrandt. Of Raphael, it is needless to say any thing. He had very little of Titian's manner, except perhaps a greater breadth and uniform richness of colour than he would have acquired from Rembrandt. He had none of the dignity or animation of Titian's portraits. It is not speaking too highly of the portraits of Titian to say, that they have as much expression, that is, convey as fine an idea of intellect and feeling, as the historical heads of Raphael. The difference seems to be only, that the expression in Raphael is more contemplative and philosophical, and in Titian more personal and constitutional. In the portraits of the latter, the Italian character always predominates: there is a look of piercing sagacity, of commanding intellect, of acute sensibility, which it would be in vain to expect to find in English portraits. The daring spirit and irritable passions of the age and country are as distinctly stamped upon the countenances, and can be as little mistaken as the costume which they wear. Many of them look as if it would be hardly safe to be left in the room with them, so completely do they convey the idea of superiority.<sup>1</sup> The portraits of Raphael,

<sup>1</sup> A young artist of the name of Day, in company with Mr. Northcote and another student, taking leave of some pictures of Titian in a gallery at Naples said, with tears in his eyes,—'Ah! he was a fine old mouser!' This contains more true feeling than volumes of poetical criticism. Mr. Northcote has himself given a striking description

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though full of profound thought and character, have more of common humanity about them.—Of Vandyke, as we have observed before, Sir Joshua had neither the excellences nor defects. Some years ago, we saw his picture of the Marquis of Granby, and Vandyke's picture of Charles I. (engraved by Strange) standing by one another, in the Louvre. The difference was striking. The portrait of the nobleman looked heavy and muddled, from the mode of heaping on the colours, and the determination to produce effect alone without attention to the subordinate details defeated itself. The portrait of the unfortunate monarch, on the contrary, displayed the utmost delicacy and facility of execution. Every part would bear the nicest inspection, and yet the whole composition, the monarch, the figure of the horse, and the attendants, had all the distinctness, lightness, and transparency of objects seen in the open air. There are some persons who will still prefer the former mode of execution as more bold and dashing. For the same reason, we might prefer the copies of the head of the Marquis of Granby, which we so often see in conspicuous situations in the vicinity of the metropolis, to the original.

Of Rubens our admired countryman had neither the facility nor brilliancy. He was crude and heavy both in drawing and colour, compared with the Flemish painter. Rembrandt was the painter of all others whom Sir Joshua most resembled, and from whom he borrowed most. Strong masses of light and shade, harmony and clearness of tone, the production of effect by masterly, broad, and rapid execution were in general the *forte* of both these painters. Rembrandt had the priority in the order of time, and also in power of hand and eye. There are no pictures of Reynolds's which will stand against the best of Rembrandt's for striking effect and an intense feeling of nature. They are faint, slovenly, dingy, and commonplace in comparison. Rembrandt had even greater versatility of genius. He had an eye for all objects as far as he had seen them. His history and landscapes are equally fine in their way. He might be said to have created a style of his own, which he also perfected. In fact, he is one of the great founders and legislators of art. Of Correggio, Reynolds borrowed little but the air of some of his female heads, and the models of his children, which he injudiciously overloaded with the massy light and shade of Rembrandt, instead of the tender *chiaroscuro* of Correggio, the only colouring proper for that

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of Titian, in his elegant allegory called the Painter's Dream, at the end of his life of Sir Joshua. It is worth remarking, that notwithstanding the delicacy and ingenuity with which he has contrived to vary the characters of all the other painters, yet when he comes to his favourite modern, he can only repeat the same images which he has before applied to Correggio and others, of wanton Cupids and attendant Graces.

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kind of soft, undulating, retiring line of beauty. We shall sum up our opinion by saying, that we do not find in the works of Sir Joshua either the majesty and power, the delicacy and refinement, the luxurious splendour and dazzling invention, neither the same originality of conception, nor perfect execution, which are to be found in the greatest painters. Nevertheless, his works did honour to his art and to his country.

### INTRODUCTION TO AN ACCOUNT OF SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS'S DISCOURSES: I

*The Champion.*

November 27, 1814.

THE general merit of these Discourses is so well established that it would be needless to enlarge on it here. The graces of the composition are such, that scholars have been led to suspect that it was the style of Burke (the first prose-writer of our time) carefully subdued, and softened down to perfection: and the taste and knowledge of the subject displayed in them are so great, that this work has been, by common consent, considered as a text-book on the subject of art, in our English school of painting, ever since its publication. Highly elegant and valuable as Sir Joshua's opinions are, yet they are liable (so it appears to us) to various objections; and it becomes more important to state these objections, because, as it generally happens, the most questionable of his precepts are those which have been the most eagerly adopted, and carried into practice with the greatest success. The errors, if they are such, which we shall attempt to point out, are not casual, but systematic. There is a fine-spun metaphysical theory, either not very clearly understood, or not very correctly expressed, pervading Sir Joshua's reasoning; and which appears to have led him in several of the most important points to conclusions, either false or only true in part.<sup>1</sup> The rules thus laid down, as general and comprehensive maxims, are in fact founded on a set of half principles, which are true only as far as they imply a negation of the opposite errors, but contain in themselves the germ of other errors just as fatal: which, if strictly and literally understood, cannot be defended, and which by being taken in an equivocal sense, of course leave the student as much to seek as ever. The English school of painting is universally reproached by foreigners with the slovenly and unfinished state in which they send their productions into the world, with their ignorance of academic rules and neglect of the

<sup>1</sup> This theory will be found contained in Richardson's *Essay on Painting*, and in Coypel's *Discourses to the French Academy*.

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subordinate details; in other words, with aiming at *effect* only in all their works of art: and though it is by no means necessary that we should adopt the defects of the French and German painters, yet we might learn from them to correct our own. There was no occasion to encourage our constitutional indolence and impatience by positive rules, or to incorporate our vicious habits into a system. Or if our defects were to be retained, at least they ought to have been tolerated only for the sake of certain collateral and characteristic excellences out of which they might be thought to spring. Thus a certain degree of precision or regularity might be sacrificed rather than impair that boldness, vigour, and originality of conception, in which the strength of the national genius might be supposed to lie. But the method of instruction pursued in the Discourses seems calculated for neither of these objects. Without endeavouring to overcome our habitual defects, which might be corrected by proper care and study, it damps our zeal, ardour, and enthusiasm. It places a full reliance neither on art nor nature, but consists in a kind of fastidious tampering with both. Both genius and industry are put out of countenance in turn. The height of invention is made to consist in compiling from others, and the perfection of imitation is not copying from nature. We lose the substance of the art in catching at a shadow, and are thought to embrace a cloud for a Goddess!

That we may not seem to prejudge the question, we shall state at once, and without further preface, the principal points in the Discourses which we deem either wrong in themselves, or liable to misconception and abuse. They are the following:—

1. *That genius or invention consists chiefly in borrowing the ideas of others, or in using other men's minds.*
2. *That the great style in painting depends on leaving out the details of particular objects.*
3. *That the essence of portrait consists in giving the general character, rather than the individual likeness.*
4. *That the essence of history consists in abstracting from individuality of character and expression as much as possible.*
5. *That beauty or ideal perfection consists in a central form.*
6. *That to imitate nature is a very inferior object in art.*

All of these positions appear to require a separate consideration, which we shall give them in the following articles on this subject.

# SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS'S DISCOURSES

## II: ON GENIUS AND ORIGINALITY

*The Champion.*

December 4, 1814.

IT is a leading and favourite position of the Discourses that genius and invention are principally shewn in borrowing the ideas, and imitating the excellences of others. Differing entirely from those 'who have undertaken to write on the art of painting, and have represented it as a kind of *inspiration*, as a *gift* bestowed upon peculiar favourites at their birth,' Sir Joshua proceeds to add, 'I am, on the contrary, persuaded, that by imitation only,' (that is, of former masters,) 'variety and even originality of invention is produced. I will go further! even genius, at least what is generally called so, is the child of imitation.' 'There can be no doubt but that he who has most materials has the greatest means of invention; and if he has not the power of using them, it must proceed from a feebleness of intellect.' 'Study is the art of using other men's minds.' 'It is from Raphael's having taken so many models, that he became himself a model for all succeeding painters; always imitating, and always original.' Vol. i. p. 151, 159, 169, &c. All that Sir Joshua says on this subject, is either vague and contradictory, or has an evident bias the wrong way. That genius either consists in, or is in any proportion to, the knowledge of what others have done, in any branch of art or science, is a paradox which hardly admits serious refutation. The answer is indeed so obvious and so undeniable, that one is almost ashamed to give it. As it happens in all such cases, an advantage is taken of the old-fashioned simplicity of truth to triumph over it. It is another of Sir Joshua's theoretical opinions, often repeated, and almost as often retracted in his lectures, that there is no such thing as genius in the first formation of the human mind. That is not the question here, though perhaps we may recur to it. But, however a man may come by the faculty which we call *genius*, whether it is the effect of habit and circumstances, or the gift of nature, yet there can be no doubt, that what is meant by the term, is a power of original observation and invention. To take it otherwise, is a solecism in language, and a misnomer in art. A work demonstrates genius exactly as it contains what is to be found no where else, or in proportion to what we add to the ideas of others from our own stores, and not to what we receive from them. It may contain also what is to be found in other works, but it is not that which stamps it with the character of genius. The contrary view of the question can only tend to deter those who have genius from using it, and to make those who are without genius, think they have it. It is attempting to excite the mind to the highest efforts

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of intellectual excellence, by denying the chief ground-work of all intellectual distinction. It is from the same general spirit of distrust of the existence or power of genius that Sir Joshua exclaims with confidence and triumph, 'There is one precept, however, in which I shall only be opposed by the vain, the ignorant, and the idle. I am not afraid that I shall repeat it too often. You MUST HAVE NO DEPENDENCE ON YOUR OWN GENIUS. If you have great talents, industry will improve them. If you have but moderate abilities, it will supply their deficiency. Nothing is denied to well directed labour; nothing can be obtained without it. Not to enter into metaphysical discussions on the nature and essence of genius, I will venture to assert, that assiduity unabated by difficulty, and a disposition eagerly directed to the object of its pursuit, will produce effects similar to those which some call the *result of natural powers*.' P. 44, 45. Yet so little influence had the metaphysical theory, which he wished to hold *in terrorem* over the young enthusiast, on Sir Joshua's habitual unreflecting good sense, that he afterwards, in speaking of the attainments of Carlo Maratti, which, as well as those of Raphael, he attributes to his imitation of others, says, 'It is true there is nothing very captivating in Carlo Maratti; but this proceeded from a want which cannot be completely supplied, that is, *want of strength of parts*. In this, certainly, *men are not equal*; and a man can bring home wares only in proportion to the capital with which he goes to market. Carlo, by diligence, made the most of what he had: but there was undoubtedly a heaviness about him, which extended itself uniformly to his invention, expression, his drawing, colouring, and the general effect of his pictures. The truth is, he never equalled any of his patterns in any one thing, and he added little of his own.' P. 172. Poor Carlo, it seems, then, was excluded from the benefit of the sweeping clause in this general charter of dulness, by which all men are declared to be equal in natural powers, and to owe their superiority only to superior industry. What is here said of Carlo Maratti is, however, an exact description of the fate of all those, who, without any genius of their own, pretend to avail themselves of the genius of others. Sir Joshua attempts to confound genius and the want of it together, by shewing, that some men of great genius have not disdained to borrow largely from their predecessors, while others, who affected to be entirely original, have really invented little of their own. This is from the purpose. If Raphael, for instance, had only copied his figure of St. Paul from Mascacio, or his groupe, in the sacrifice of Lystra, from the ancient bas-relief, without adding other figures of equal force and beauty, he would have been considered as a mere plagiarist. As it is, the pictures here referred to, would undoubtedly have displayed more

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genius, that is, more originality, if those figures had also been his own invention. Nay, Sir Joshua himself, in giving the preference of genius to Michael Angelo, does it on this very ground, that 'Michael Angelo's works seem to proceed from his own mind entirely, and that mind so rich and abundant, that he never needed, or seemed to disdain to look abroad for foreign help;' whereas, 'Raffaello's materials are generally borrowed, though the noble structure is his own.' On the justice of this last statement, we shall remark presently. Perhaps Reynolds's general account of the insignificance of genius, and the all-sufficiency of the merits of others, may be looked upon as an indirect apology for the gradual progress of his own mind, in selecting and appropriating the beauties of the great artists who went before him: he appears anxious to describe and dignify the process, from which he himself derived such felicitous results, but which, as a general system of instruction, can only produce mediocrity and imbecility. It is a lesson which a well-bred drawing-master might with great propriety repeat by rote to his fashionable pupils, but which a learned professor, whose object was to lead the aspiring mind to the heights of fame, ought not to have offered to the youth of a nation. 'You must have no dependence on your own genius,' is, according to Sir Joshua, the universal foundation of all high endeavours, the beginning of all true wisdom, and the end of all true art. Would Sir Joshua have given this advice to Michael Angelo, or to Raphael, or to Correggio? Or would he have given it to Rembrandt, or Rubens, or Vandyke, or Claude Lorraine, or to our own Hogarth? Would it have been followed, or what would have been the consequence, if it had?—That we should never have heard of any of these personages, or only heard of them as instances to prove that nothing great can be done without genius and originality! We are at a loss to conceive where, upon the principle here stated, Hogarth would have found the materials of his *Marriage à la Mode*? or Rembrandt his *Three Trees*? or Claude Lorraine his *Enchanted Castle*, with that one simple figure in the foreground,—

'Sole sitting by the shores of old romance?'

Or from what but an eye always intent on nature, and brooding over 'beauty, rendered still more beautiful' by the exquisite feeling with which it was contemplated, did he borrow his verdant landscapes and his azure skies, the bare sight of which wafts the imagination to Arcadian scenes, 'thrice happy fields, and groves, and flowery vales,' breathing perpetual youth and freshness? If Claude had gone out to study on the banks of the Tyber with Sir Joshua's first precept in his mouth, 'Individual nature produces little beauty,' and had

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returned poring over the second, which is like unto it, 'You must have no dependence on your own genius,' the world would have lost one perfect painter.<sup>1</sup> Rubens would have shared the same fate, with all his train of fluttering Cupids, warriors and prancing steeds, panthers and piping Bacchanals, nymphs, fawns and satyrs, if he had not been reserved for 'the tender mercies' of the modern French critics, David and his pupils, who think that the Luxembourg gallery ought to be destroyed, to make room for their own execrable performances. Or we should never have seen that fine landscape of his in the Louvre, with a rainbow on one side, the whole face of nature refreshed after the shower, and some shepherds under a group of trees piping to their heedless flocks, if instead of painting what he saw and what he felt to be fine, he had set himself to solve the learned riddle proposed by Sir Joshua, whether *accidents in nature* should be introduced in landscape, since Claude has rejected them. It is well that genius gets the start of criticism; for if these two great landscape painters, not being privileged to consult their own taste and inclinations, had been compelled to wait till the rules of criticism had decided the preference between their different styles, instead of having both, we should have had neither. The folly of all such comparisons consists in supposing that we are reduced to a single alternative in our choice of excellence, and the true answer to the question, 'Which do you like best, Rubens's landscapes or Claude's?' is the one which was given on another occasion—both. If it be meant which of the two an artist should imitate, the answer is, the one which he is likely to imitate best. As to Rembrandt, he would not have stood the least chance with this new theory of art. But the warning sounds, 'you must have no dependence on your own genius,' never reached him in the little study where he watched the dim shadows cast by his dying embers on the wall, or at other times saw the clouds driven before the storm, or the blaze of noon-day brightness bursting through his casement on the mysterious gloom which surrounded him. What a pity that his old master could not have received a friendly hint from Sir Joshua, that getting rid of his vulgar musty prejudices, he might have set out betimes for the regions of *virtu*, have scaled the ladder of taste, have measured the antique, lost himself in the Vatican, and after 'wandering through dry places, seeking he knew not what, and finding nothing,' have returned home

<sup>1</sup> This painter's book of studies from nature, commonly called *Liber Veritatis*, disproves the truth of Sir Joshua's assumption, that his landscapes are mere general compositions, for the finished pictures are nearly fac-similes of the original sketches, and what is added to them in point of regularity (if this addition was any advantage) was at least the result of his own genius.

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as great a critic and painter as so many others have done ! Of Titian, Vandyke, or Correggio we shall say nothing here, as we have said so much in another place.

A theory, then, by which these great artists could have been lost to themselves and to the art, and which explains away the two chief supports and sources of all art, *nature* and *genius*, into an unintelligible jargon of words, cannot be intrinsically true. The principles thus laid down may be very proper to conduct the machinery of a royal academy, or to precede the distribution of prizes to the students, or to be the topics of assent and congratulation among the members themselves at their annual exhibition dinner : but they are so far from being calculated to foster genius or to direct its course, that they can only blight or mislead it, wherever it exists, and 'lose more men of talents to this nation,' by the dissemination of false principles, than have been already lost to it by the want of any.

But it may be said, that though the perfection of portrait or landscape may be derived from the immediate study of nature, yet higher subjects are not to be found in it ; that there we must raise our imaginations by referring to artificial models ; and that Raphael was compelled to go to Michael Angelo and the antique. Not to insist that Michael Angelo himself, according to Sir Joshua's account, formed an exception to this rule, it has been well observed on this statement, that what Raphael borrowed was to conceal or supply his natural deficiencies : what he excelled in was his own. Raphael never had the grandeur of form of Michael Angelo, nor the correctness of form of the antique. His expression was perfectly different from both, and perhaps better than either, certainly better than what we have seen of Michael Angelo in the prints from him compared with those from Raphael in the Vatican. In Raphael's faces, particularly his women, the expression is superior to the form ; in the antique statues, the form is evidently the principal thing. The interest which they excite is in a manner external, it depends on a certain grace and lightness of appearance, joined with exquisite symmetry and refined susceptibility to voluptuous emotions, but there is no pathos ; or if there is, it is the pathos of present and physical distress, rather than of sentiment. There is not that deep internal interest which there is in Raphael ; which broods over the suggestions of the heart with love and fear till the tears seem ready to gush out, but that they are checked by the deeper sentiments of hope and faith. What has been remarked of Leonardo da Vinci, is still more true of Raphael, that there is an angelic sweetness and tenderness in his faces peculiarly adapted to his subjects, in which natural frailty and passion are purified by the sanctity of religion. They answer exactly

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to Milton's description of the 'human face divine.' The ancient statues are finer objects for the eye to contemplate : they represent a more perfect race of physical beings, but we have no sympathy with them. In Raphael, all our natural sensibilities are raised and refined by pointing mysteriously to the interests of another world. The same intensity of passion appears also to distinguish Raphael from Michael Angelo. Michael Angelo's forms are grander, but they are not so full of expression. Raphael's, however ordinary in themselves, are full of expression even to o'erflowing : every nerve and muscle is impregnated with feeling, or bursting with meaning. In Michael Angelo, on the contrary, the powers of body and mind appear superior to any events that can happen to them, the capacity of thought and feeling is never full, never tasked or strained to the utmost that it will bear. All is in a lofty repose and solitary grandeur which no human interests can shake or disturb. It has been said that Michael Angelo painted *man*, and Raphael *men* ; that the one was an epic, the other a dramatic painter. But the distinction we have made is perhaps truer and more intelligible, *viz.* that the former gave greater dignity of form, and the latter greater force and refinement of expression. Michael Angelo borrowed his style from sculpture, which represented in general only single figures, (with subordinate accompaniments,) and had not to express the conflicting actions and passions of a multitude of persons. He is much more picturesque than Raphael. The whole figure of his Jeremiah droops and hangs down like a majestic tree surcharged with showers. His drawing of the human figure has all the characteristic freedom and boldness of Titian's landscapes.<sup>1</sup>

To return to Sir Joshua. He has given one very strange proof that there is no such thing as genius, namely, that 'the degrees of excellence which proclaims genius is different in different times and places.' If Sir Joshua had aimed at a confutation of himself, he could not have done it more effectually. For what is it that makes the difference but that which originates in a man's self, *i.e.*, is first done by him, is genius, and when it is no longer original, but borrowed from former examples, it ceases to be genius, since no one can establish this claim by following the steps of others, but by going before them? The test of genius may be different, but the thing itself is the same,—a power at all times to do or to invent what has not before been done or invented. It is plain from the passage

<sup>1</sup> Sir Joshua considers it as a great disadvantage to Raphael in studying from the antique, that he had not the facilities afforded by modern prints, but was forced to seek out, and copy them one by one with great care. We should be disposed to reverse this conclusion.

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above cited what influenced Sir Joshua's mind in his views on this subject. He quarrelled with genius from being annoyed with premature pretensions to it. He was apprehensive that if genius were allowed to stand for any thing, industry would go for nothing in the minds of 'the vain, the ignorant, and the idle.' But as genius will do little without labour in an art so mechanical as painting, so labour will do still less without genius. Indeed, wherever there is true genius, there will be true labour, that is, the exertion of that genius in the field most proper for it. Sir Joshua, from his unwillingness to admit one extreme, has fallen into the other, and has mistaken the detection of an error for a demonstration of the truth. 'The human understanding,' says Luther, 'resembles a drunken clown on horse-back; if you set it up on one side, it tumbles over on the other.'

### III: ON THE IMITATION OF NATURE

*The Champion.*

December 25, 1814.

THE imitation of nature is the great object of art. Of course, the principles by which this imitation should be regulated, form the leading topic of Sir Joshua Reynolds's lectures. It is certain that the mechanical imitation of individual objects, or the parts of individual objects, does not always produce beauty or grandeur; or, generally speaking that *the whole of art does not consist in copying nature*. Reynolds seems hence disposed to infer, that the whole of art consists in *not* imitating individual nature. This is also an error, and an error on the worst side.

Sir Joshua's general system may be summed up in two words,—*'That the great style in painting consists in avoiding the details, and peculiarities of particular objects.'* This sweeping principle he applies almost indiscriminately to portrait, history, and landscape;—and he appears to have been led to the conclusion itself, from supposing the imitation of particulars to be inconsistent with general truth and effect. It will not be unimportant to inquire how far this opinion is well-founded: for it appears to us, that the highest perfection of the art depends, not on the separation, but on the union (as far as possible) of general truth and effect with individual distinctness and accuracy.

First, it is said that the great style in painting, as it relates to the immediate imitation of external nature, consists in avoiding the details of particular objects.

It consists neither in giving nor avoiding them, but in something quite different from both. Any one may avoid the details. So far, there is no difference between the Cartoons, and a common sign-

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painting. Greatness consists in giving the larger masses and proportions with truth;—this does not prevent giving the smaller ones too. The utmost grandeur of outline, and the broadest masses of light and shade, are perfectly compatible with the greatest minuteness and delicacy of detail, as may be seen in nature. It is not, indeed, common to see both qualities combined in the imitations of nature, any more than the combination of other excellences; nor are we here saying to which the principal attention of the artist should be directed; but we deny, that, considered in themselves, the absence of the one quality is necessary or sufficient to the production of the other.

If, for example, the form of the eye-brow is correctly given, it will be perfectly indifferent to the truth or grandeur of the design, whether it consist of one broad mark, or is composed of a number of hair-lines, arranged in the same order. So, if the lights and shades are disposed in fine and large masses, the *breadth* of the picture, as it is called, cannot possibly be affected by the filling up of those masses with the details;—that is, with the subordinate distinctions which appear in nature. The anatomical details in Michael Angelo, the ever-varying outline of Raphael, the perfect execution of the Greek statues, do not assuredly destroy their symmetry or dignity of form;—and in the finest specimens of the composition of colour, we may observe the largest masses combined with the greatest variety in the parts, of which those masses are composed.

The *gross* style consists in giving no details,—the *finical* in giving nothing else. Nature contains both large and small parts,—both masses and details; and the same may be said of the most perfect works of art. The union of both kinds of excellence, of strength with delicacy, as far as the limits of human capacity and the shortness of human life would permit, is that which has established the reputation of the greatest masters. Farther,—their most finished works are their best. The predominance, however, of either excellence in these masters, has, of course, varied according to their opinion of the relative value of these different qualities,—the labour they had the time or patience to bestow on their works,—the skill of the artist, or the nature and extent of his subject. But, if the rule here objected to,—that the careful imitation of the parts injures the effect of the whole,—be at once admitted, slovenliness would become another name for genius, and the most unfinished performance would necessarily be the best. That such has been the confused impression left on the mind by the perusal of Sir Joshua's discourses, is evident from the practice as well as the

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conversation of many (even eminent) artists. The late Mr. Opie proceeded entirely on this principle. He left many admirable studies of portraits, particularly in what relates to the disposition and effect of light and shade. But he never finished any of the parts, thinking them beneath the attention of a great man. He went over the whole head the second day as he had done the day before, and therefore made no progress. The picture at last, having neither the lightness of a sketch, nor the accuracy of a finished work, looked coarse, laboured, and heavy.

'Would you then have an artist finish like Denner?' is the triumphant appeal which is made as decisive against all objections. To which, as it is an appeal to authority, the proper answer seems to be,—'No; but we would have him finish like Titian or Correggio.' Denner is an example of finishing not to be followed, but shunned, because *he did nothing but finish*; because he finished ill, and because he finished to excess;—for in all things there is a certain proportion of means to ends. He pored into the littlenesses of objects, till he lost sight of nature, instead of imitating it. He represents the human face, perhaps, as it might appear through a magnifying-glass, but certainly not as it ever appears to us. It is the business of painting to express objects as they appear naturally, not as they may be made to appear artificially. His flesh is as blooming and glossy as a flower or a shell. Titian's finishing, on the contrary, is equally admirable, because it is engrafted on the most profound knowledge of effect, and attention to the character of what he represents. His pictures have the exact look of nature, the very tone and texture of flesh. The endless variety of his tints is blended into the greatest simplicity. There is a proper degree both of solidity and transparency. All the parts hang together: every stroke tells, and adds to the effect of the rest.

To understand the value of any excellence, we must refer to the use which has been made of it, not to instances of its abuse. If there is a certain degree of ineffectual microscopic finishing, which we never find united with an attention to other higher and more indispensable parts of the art, we may suspect that there is something incompatible between them, and that the pursuit of the one diverts the mind from the attainment of the other. But this is the real point to stop at—where alone we should limit our theory or our efforts. Wherever different excellences have been actually united to a certain point of perfection, to that point (abstractedly speaking) we are sure that they may, and ought to be united again. There is no occasion to add the incitements of indolence, affectation, and false theory, to the other causes which contribute to the decline of art!

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Sir Joshua seems, indeed, to deny that Titian finished much, and says that he produced, by two or three strokes of his pencil, effects which the most laborious copyists would in vain attempt to equal. It is true that he availed himself, in a considerable degree, of what is called *execution*, to facilitate his imitation of nature, but it was to facilitate, not to supersede it. By the methods of scumbling or glazing, he often broke the masses of his flesh,—or by laying on lumps of colour produced particular effects, to a degree that he could not otherwise have reached without considerable loss of time. We do not object to execution: it saves labour, and shews a mastery both of hand and eye. But then there is nothing more distinct than execution and *daubing*. Indeed, it is evident, that the only use of execution is to give the details more compendiously, and sometimes, even more happily. Leave out all regard to the details, reduce the whole into crude unvarying masses, and it becomes totally useless; for these can be given just as well without execution as with it. Titian, however, made a very moderate, though a very admirable use of this power; and those who copy his pictures will find, that the simplicity is in the results, not in the details.

The other Venetian painters made too violent a use of execution, unless their subjects formed an excuse for them. Vandyke successfully employed it in giving the last finishing to the details. Rembrandt employed it still more, and with more perfect truth of effect.—Rubens employed it equally, but not so as to produce an equal resemblance of nature. His pencil ran away with his eye.—To conclude our observations on this head, we will only add, that while the artist thinks that there is any thing to be done, either to the whole or to the parts of his picture, which can give it still more the look of nature, if he is willing to proceed, we would not advise him to desist.—This rule is still more necessary to the young student, for he will relax in his attention as he grows older. And again, with respect to the subordinate parts of a picture, there is no danger that he will bestow a disproportionate degree of labour upon them, because he will not feel the same interest in copying them, and because a much less degree of accuracy will serve every purpose of deception;—the nicety of our habitual observations being always in proportion to our interest in the objects.—Sir Joshua somewhere objects to the attempt to deceive by painting; and his reason is, that wax-work, which deceives most effectually, is a very disagreeable as well as contemptible art. It might be answered, first, that nothing is much more unlike nature than such figures generally are, and farther, that they only produce the appearance of prominence and relief, by having it in reality,—in which they are just the reverse of painting.

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Secondly, with regard to **EXPRESSION**, we can hardly agree with Sir Joshua that '*the perfection of imitation consists in giving the general idea or character, not the peculiarities of individuals.*'—We do not think this rule at all well-founded with respect to portrait-painting, nor applicable to history to the extent to which Sir Joshua carries it. For the present, we shall confine ourselves to the former of these.

No doubt, if we were to chuse between the general character and the peculiarities of feature, we ought to prefer the former. But they are so far from being incompatible with, that they are not without some difficulty distinguishable from, each other. There is indeed a general look of the face, a predominant expression arising from the correspondence and connection of the different parts, which it is always of the first and last importance to give; and without which no elaboration of detached parts, or marking of the peculiarity of single features, is worth any thing; but which at the same time, is certainly not destroyed, but assisted, by the careful finishing, and still more by giving the exact outline of each part.

It is on this point that the French and English schools differ, and (in my opinion) are both wrong. The English seem generally to suppose, that, if they only leave out the subordinate parts, they are sure of the general result. The French, on the contrary, as idly imagine, that by attending to each separate part, they must infallibly arrive at a correct whole,—not considering that, besides the parts, there is their relation to each other, and the general character stamped upon them by the mind itself, which to be seen must be felt,—for it is demonstrable that all expression and character are perceived by the mind, and not by the eye only. The French painters see only lines, and *précise* differences;—the English only general masses, and strong effects. Hence the two nations constantly reproach one another with the difference of their styles of art; the one as dry, hard and minute, the other as gross, gothic, and unfinished; and they will probably remain for ever satisfied *with each other's defects*, which afford a very tolerable fund of consolation on either side.

There is something in the two styles, which arises, perhaps, from national countenance as well as character:—the French physiognomy is frittered away into a parcel of little moveable compartments and distinct signs of intelligence,—like a telegraphic machinery. The English countenance, on the other hand, is too apt to sink into a lumpish mass, with very few ideas, and those set in a sort of stupid stereotype.

To return to the proper business of portrait-painting. We mean to speak of it, not as a lucrative profession, nor as an indolent amusement, (for we interfere with no man's profits or pleasures), but as a *bona fide*

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art, the object of which is to exercise the talents of the artist, and to add to the stock of ideas in the public. And in this point of view, we should imagine that that is the best portrait which contains the fullest representation of individual nature.

Portrait-painting is the biography of the pencil, and he who gives most of the peculiarities and details, with most of the general character,—that is of *keeping*,—is the best biographer, and the best portrait-painter. What if Boswell (the prince of biographers) had not given us the scene between Wilkes and Johnson at Dilly's table, or had not introduced the little episode of Goldsmith strutting about in his peach-coloured coat after the success of his play,—should we have had a more perfect idea of the general character of those celebrated persons from the omission of these particulars? Or if Reynolds had not painted the former as '*blinking Sam*,' or had given us such a representation of the latter as we see of some modern poets in some modern magazines, the fame of that painter would have been confined to the circles of fashion,—where they naturally look for the same selection of beauties in a portrait, as of topics in a dedication, or a copy of complimentary verses!

It has not been uncommon that portraits of this kind, which professed to admit all the peculiarities, and to heighten all the excellences of a face, have been elevated by ignorance and affectation, to the dignified rank of historical portrait. But in fact they are merely *caricature transposed*: that is, as the caricaturist makes a mouth wider than it really is, so the painter of *flattering likenesses* (as they are termed) makes it not so wide, by a process just as mechanical, and more insipid. Instead, however, of objecting captiously to common theory or practice, it will perhaps be better to state at once our own conceptions of historical portrait. It consists, then, in seizing the predominant form or expression, and preserving it with truth throughout every part. It is representing the individual under one consistent, probable, and striking view; or shewing the different features, muscles, &c. in one action, and modified by one principle. A face thus painted, is *historical*;—that is, it carries its own internal evidence of truth and nature with it; and the number of individual peculiarities, as long as they are true to nature, cannot lessen, but must add to the general strength of the impression.

To give an example or two of what we mean. We conceive that the common portrait of Oliver Cromwell would be less valuable and striking if the wart on the face were taken away. It corresponds with the general roughness and knottiness of the rest of the face;—or if considered merely as an accident, it operates as a kind of circumstantial evidence of the genuineness of the representation. Sir

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Joshua Reynolds's portrait of Dr. Johnson has altogether that sluggishness of outward appearance,—that want of quickness and versatility,—that absorption of faculty, and look of purblind reflection, which were characteristic of his mind. The accidental discomposure of his wig indicates his habits. If, with the same felicity and truth of conception, this portrait (we mean the common one reading) had been more made out, it would not have been less historical, though it would have been more like and natural.

Titian's portraits are the most historical that ever were painted; and they are so for this reason, that they have most consistency of form and expression. His portraits of Hippolito de Medici, and of a young Neapolitan nobleman in the Louvre, are a striking contrast in this respect. All the lines of the face in the one;—the eye-brows, the nose, the corners of the mouth, the contour of the face,—present the same sharp angles, the same acute, edgy, contracted expression. The other face has the finest expansion of feature and outline, and conveys the most exquisite idea possible of mild, thoughtful sentiment. The harmony of the expression constitutes as great a charm in Titian's portraits, as that of colour. The similarity sometimes objected to them, is partly national, and partly arises from the class of persons whom he painted. He painted only Italians; and in his time none but persons of the highest rank, senators or cardinals, sat for their pictures.

Sir Joshua appears to have been led into several errors by a false use of the terms *general* and *particular*. Nothing can be more different than the various application of both these terms to different things, and yet Sir Joshua constantly uses and reasons upon them as invariable. There are three senses of the expression *general character*, as applied to ideas or objects. In the first, it signifies the general appearance or aggregate impression of the whole object, as opposed to the mere detail of detached parts. In the second, it signifies the class, or what a number of such objects have in common with one another, to the exclusion of their characteristic differences. In this sense it is tantamount to *abstract*. In the third it signifies what is usual or common, in opposition to mere singularity, or accidental exceptions to the ordinary course of nature. The general idea or character of a particular face, *i.e.* the aggregate impression resulting from all the parts combined, is surely very different from the abstract idea, or what it has in common with several others. If on giving the former all character depends; to give nothing but the latter is to take away all character. The more a painter *comprehends* of what he sees, the more valuable his work will be: but it is not true that his excellence will be the greater, the more he *abstracts* from what he sees.

## ON THE IDEAL

—There is an essential distinction which Sir Joshua has not observed. The details and peculiarities of nature are only inconsistent with abstract ideas, and not with general or aggregate effects. By confounding the two things, Sir Joshua excludes the peculiarities and details not only from his historical composition, but from an enlarged view and comprehensive imitation of individual nature.

We have here attempted to give some account of what should be meant by the *ideal* in portrait-painting: in our next and concluding article on this subject, we shall attempt an explanation of this term, as it applies to historical painting.

### IV: ON THE IDEAL

*The Champion.*

January 8, 1815.

‘FOR I would by no means be thought to comprehend those writers of surprising genius, the authors of immense romances, or the modern novel and Atalantis writers, who, without any assistance from nature or history, record persons who never were, or will be, and facts which never did, nor possibly can happen: whose heroes are of their own creation, and their brains the chaos whence all their materials are collected. Not that such writers deserve no honour; so far from it, that perhaps they merit the highest. One may apply to them what Balzac says of Aristotle, that they are a *second nature*; for they have no communication with the first, by which authors of an inferior class, who cannot stand alone, are obliged to support themselves, as with crutches.’—FIELDING’S *Joseph Andrews*, vol. ii.

What is here said of certain writers of romance, would apply equally to a great number of painters of history. These persons, not without the sanction of high authority, have come to the conclusion that they had only to quit the vulgar path of truth and reality, in order that they ‘might ascend the brightest heaven of invention,’—and that to get rid of nature was all that was necessary to the loftiest flights of art, as the soul disentangled from the load of matter soars to its native skies. But this is by no means the truth. All art is built upon nature; and the tree of knowledge lifts its branches to the clouds, only as it has struck its roots deep into the earth. He is the greatest artist, not who leaves the materials of nature behind him, but who carries them with him into the world of invention;—and the larger and more entire the masses in which he is able to apply them to his purpose, the stronger and more durable will his productions be. Sir Joshua Reynolds admits that the knowledge of the individual forms and various combinations of nature, is necessary to the student, but it is only in order that he may *avoid* them, and steering clear of all representation of things as they actually exist, wander up and down in the empty void of his own imagination, having nothing better to

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cling to, than certain shadowy middle forms, made up of an abstraction of all others, and containing nothing in themselves. Stripping nature of substance and accident, he is to exhibit a decomposed, disembodied, vague, ideal nature in her stead, seen through the misty veil of metaphysics, and covered with the same fog and haze of confusion, while

' Obscurity her curtain round him draws,  
And siren sloth a dull quietus sings.'

The concrete, and not the abstract, is the object of painting, and of all the works of imagination. History-painting is *imaginary* portrait-painting. The portrait-painter gives you an individual, such as he is in himself, and vouches for the truth of the likeness as a matter of fact: the historical painter gives you the individual such as he is likely to be,—that is, approaches as near to the reality as his imagination will enable him to do, leaving out such particulars as are inconsistent with the pre-conceived idea,—as are merely trifling and accidental,—and retaining all such as are striking, probable, and consistent. Because the historical painter has not the same immediate data to go upon, but must connect individual nature with an imaginary subject, is that any reason why he should discard individual nature altogether, and thus leave nothing for his imagination, or the imagination of the spectator to work upon? Portrait and history differ as a narration of facts or a probable fiction differ; but abstraction is the essence of neither. That is not the finest historical head which has least the look of nature, but which has most the look of nature, if it has the look of history also. But it has the look of nature, *i.e.* of striking and probable nature,—as it has a marked and decided character, and not a character of indifference: and as the features and expression are consistent with themselves, not as they are common to others. The ideal is that which answers to the idea of something, and not to the idea of any thing, or of nothing. Any countenance strikes most upon the imagination, either in a picture or in reality, which has most distinctness from others, and most identity with itself. The keeping in the character, not the want of character, is the essence of history. Without some such limitation as we have here given, on the general statement of Sir Joshua, we see no resting-place where the painter or the poet is to make his stand, so as not to be pushed to the utmost verge of naked commonplace inanity,—nor do we understand how there should be any such thing as poetry or painting tolerated. A *tabula rasa*, a verbal definition, the bare name, must be better than the most striking description or representation;—the argument of a poem better than the poem itself,—or the catalogue of

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a picture than the original work. Where shall we stop in the easy down-hill pass of effeminate, unmeaning insipidity? There is one circumstance, to be sure, to recommend the system here objected to, which is, that he who proposes this ideal perfection to himself, can hardly fail to succeed in it. An artist who paints on the infallible principle of not imitating nature, in representing the meeting of Telemachus and Calypso, will not find it difficult to confound all difference of sex or passion, and in pourtraying the form of Mentor, will leave out every distinctive mark of age or wisdom. In representing a Grecian marriage he will refine on his favourite principles till it will be possible to transpose the features of the bridegroom and the bride without the least violation of propriety; all the women will be like the men; and all like one another, all equally young, blooming, smiling, elegant, and insipid. On Sir Joshua's theory of the *beau ideal*, Mr. Westall's pictures are perhaps the best that ever were painted, and on any other theory, the worst; for they exhibit an absolute negation of all expression, character, and discrimination of form and colour.

We shall endeavour to explain our doctrine by some examples which appear to us either directly subversive of, or not very obviously included in, Sir J. Reynolds's theory of history painting, or of the principles of art in general. Is there any one who can possibly doubt that Hogarth's pictures are perfectly and essentially *historical*?—or that they convey a story perfectly intelligibly, with faces and expressions which every one must recognise? They have evidently a common or general character, but that general character is defined and modified by individual peculiarities, which certainly do not take away from the illusion or the effect any more than they would in nature. There is, in the polling for votes, a fat and a lean lawyer, yet both of them are lawyers, and lawyers busy at an election squabble. It is the same with the voters, who are of all descriptions, the lame, the blind, and the halt, yet who all convey the very feeling which the scene inspires, with the greatest variety and the greatest consistency of expression. The character of *Mr. Abraham Adams* by Fielding, is somewhat particular, and even singular: yet it is not less intelligible or striking on that account; and his lawyer and his landlady, though copied from individuals in real life, had yet, as he himself observes, existed four thousand years, and would continue to make a figure in the world as long as certain passions were found united with certain situations, and operating on certain dispositions.

It will, we suppose, be objected that this, though history and invention, is not high history, or poetical invention. We would answer then at once by appealing to Shakespeare. It will be allowed that his characters are poetical as well as natural; yet the individual

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portrait is almost as striking as the general expression of nature and passion. It is this and this only which distinguishes him from the French school. Dr. Johnson, proceeding on the same theoretical principles as his friend Sir Joshua, affirms, that the excellence of Shakespeare's characters consists in their generality. We grant in one sense it does; but we will add that it consists in their particularity also. Are the admirable descriptions of the kings of Thrace and Inde in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, less poetical or historical, or ideal, because they are distinguished by traits as characteristic as they are striking;—in their lineaments, their persons, their armour, their other attributes, the one black and broad, the other tall, and fair, and freckled, with yellow crisped locks that glittered as the sun. The four white bulls, and the lions which accompany them are equally fine, but they are not fine because they present no distinct image to the mind. The effect of this is somehow lost in Dryden's *Palamon and Arcite*, and the poetry is lost with it.

Much more is it necessary to combine individuality with the highest works of art in painting, 'whose end and use both at the first, now is, and was, to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature.' The painter gives the degree and peculiarity of expression where words in a manner leave off, and if he does not go beyond mere abstraction, he does nothing. The cartoons of Raphael, and his pictures in the Vatican, are sufficiently historical, yet there is hardly a face or figure in any of them which is any thing more than fine and individual nature finely disposed. The late Mr. Barry, who could not be suspected of a prejudice on this side of the question, speaks thus of them,—'In Raphael's pictures (at the Vatican) of the *Dispute of the Sacrament* and the *School of Athens*, one sees all the heads to be entirely copied from particular characters in nature, nearly proper for the persons and situation which he adapts them to; and he seems to me only to add and take away what may answer his purpose in little parts, features, &c.: conceiving, while he had the head before him, ideal characters and expressions, which he adapts these features and peculiarities of face to. This attention to the particulars which distinguish all the different faces, persons and characters, the one from the other, gives his pictures quite the verity and unaffected dignity of nature, which stamp the distinguishing differences betwixt one man's face and body and another's.'

If any thing is wanting to the conclusiveness of this testimony, it is only to look at the pictures themselves, particularly the *Miracle of the Conversion*, and the *Assembly of Saints*, which are little else than a collection of divine portraits, in natural and expressive attitudes,—full of the loftiest thought and feeling, and as varied as

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they are fine. It is this reliance on the power of nature, which has produced those master-pieces by the prince of painters, in which expression is all in all;—where one spirit—that of truth—pervades every part, brings down heaven to earth, mingles cardinals and popes with angels and apostles, and yet blends and harmonises the whole by the true touches and intense feeling of what is beautiful and grand in nature. It is no wonder that Sir Joshua, when he first saw Raphael's pictures in the Vatican, was at a loss to discover any great excellence in them, if he was looking out for his theory of the ideal, of neutral character and middle forms.

Another authority, which has been in some measure discovered since the publication of Sir Joshua's Discourses, is to be found in the Elgin Marbles, taken from the Acropolis, and supposed to be the works of the celebrated Phidias. The process of fastidious refinement, and flimsy abstraction, is certainly not visible there. The figures have all the ease, the simplicity, and variety of nature, and look more like living men turned to stone than any thing else. Even the details of the subordinate parts, the loose folds in the skin, the veins under the belly or on the sides of the horses, more or less swelled as the animal is more or less in action, are given with scrupulous exactness. This is true nature, and true history. In a word, we can illustrate our position here better than we could with respect to painting, by saying that these invaluable remains of antiquity are precisely like casts taken from nature.—Michael Angelo and the antique may still be cited against us, and we wish to speak on this subject with great diffidence. We confess, they appear to us much more artificial than the others, but we do not think that this is their excellence. For instance, it strikes us that there is something theatrical in the air of the *Apollo*, and in the *Hercules* an ostentatious and over-laboured display of the knowledge of the muscles. Perhaps the fragment of the *Theseus* at Lord Elgin's has more grandeur as well as more nature than either of them. The form of the limbs, as affected by pressure or action, and the general sway of the body, are better preserved in it. The several parts in the later Greek statues are more balanced, made more to tally like modern periods; each muscle is more equally brought out, and highly finished, and is so far better in itself, but worse as a part of a whole. If these wonderful productions have a fault, it is the want of simplicity, of a due subordination of parts, which sometimes gives them more a look of perfect lay-figures put into attitudes, than of real imitations of nature. The same objection may be urged against the works of Michael Angelo, and is indeed the necessary consequence either of selecting from a number of different models, or of proceeding on a scientific

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knowledge of the structure of the different parts; for the physical form is something given and defined, but motion is various and infinite. The superior symmetry of form, common to the ancient statues, we have no hesitation in attributing to the superior symmetry of the models in nature, and to the superior opportunity for studying them.

In general, we would be understood to mean, that the ideal is not a voluntary fiction of the brain, a fanciful piece of patch-work, a compromise between the defects of nature, or an artificial balance struck between innumerable deformities, (as if we could form a perfect idea of beauty though we never had seen any such thing,) but a preference of what is fine in nature to what is less so. There is nothing fine in art but what is taken almost immediately and entirely from what is finer in nature. Where there have been the finest models in nature, there have also been the finest works of art. The Greek statues were copied from Greek forms. Their portraits of individuals were often superior to their personifications of their gods; the head of the *Antinous*, for example, to that of the *Apollo*. Raphael's expressions were taken from Italian faces; and we have heard it observed, that the women in the streets of Rome seem to have walked out of his pictures in the Vatican.

If we are asked, then, what it is that constitutes historic expression or ideal beauty, we should answer, not (with Sir Joshua) abstract expression or middle forms, but consistency of expression in the one, and symmetry of form in the other.

A face is historical, which is made up of consistent parts, let those parts be ever so peculiar or uncommon. Those details or peculiarities only are inadmissible in history, which do not arise out of any principle, or tend to any conclusion,—which are merely casual, insignificant, and unconnected,—which do not *tell*; that is, which either do not add to, or which contradict the general result,—which are not integrant parts of one whole, however strange or irregular that whole may be. That history does not require or consist in the middle form or central features is proved by this, that the antique heads of fauns and satyrs, of *Pan* or *Silenus*, are perfectly grotesque and singular; yet are as undoubtedly historical, as the *Apollo* or the *Venus*, because they have the same predominant, intelligible, characteristic expression throughout. *Socrates* is a person whom we recognise quite as familiarly, from our general acquaintance with human nature, as *Alcibiades*.<sup>1</sup> The simplicity or the fewness of the parts of a head facilitates this effect, but is not necessary to it. The head of a negro, a mulatto, &c.,

<sup>1</sup> The pictures of Rubens at Blenheim are another proof of this, and certainly finer than the Luxembourg gallery.

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introduced into a picture is always historical, because it is always distinct from the rest, and uniform with itself. The face covered with a beard is historical for the same reason, because it presents distinct and uniform masses. Again, a face, not so in itself, becomes historical by the mere force of passion. The same strong passion moulds the features into the same emphatic expression, by giving to the mouth, the eyes, the forehead, &c., the same expansion or contraction, the same voluptuous movement or painful constraint. All intellectual and impassioned faces are historical;—the heads of philosophers, poets, lovers, and madmen. Passion sometimes produces beauty by this means, and there is a beauty of form, the effect entirely of expression; as a smiling mouth, not beautiful in common, becomes so by being put into that action.

Sir Joshua was probably led to his opinions on art in general by his theory of beauty, which he makes to consist in a certain central form, the medium of all others. In the first place, this theory is questionable in itself: or if it were not so, it does not include many other things of much more importance in historical painting (though perhaps not so in sculpture<sup>1</sup>) namely, character, which necessarily implies individuality; expression, which is the excess of thought or feeling, strength or grandeur of form, which is excess also.—There seems, however, to be a certain symmetry of form, as there is a certain harmony of sounds or colours, which gives pleasure, and produces beauty, independently of custom. Custom is undoubtedly one source or condition of beauty, but it appears to be rather its limit than its essence; that is, there are certain given forms and proportions established by nature in the structure of each thing, and sanctioned by custom, without which there can only be distortion and incongruity, but which alone do not produce beauty. One kind is more beautiful than another; and the objects of the same kind are not beautiful merely as we are used to them. The rose or lily is more beautiful than the daisy, the swan than the crow, the greyhound than the beagle, the deer than the wild goat; and we invariably prefer the Greek to the African face, though our own inclines more to the latter. We admire the broad forehead, the straight nose, the small mouth, the oval chin. Regular features are those which record and assimilate most to one another. The Greek face is made up of smooth flowing lines, and correspondent features; the African face of sharp angles and projections. A row of pillars is beautiful for the same reason. We confess, on this subject of beauty, we are half-disposed to fall into the mysticism of Raphael Mengs, who had some notion about a

<sup>1</sup> Michael Angelo took his ideas of painting from sculpture, and Sir Joshua from Michael Angelo.

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principle of *universal harmony*, if we did not dread the censure of an eminent critic.

### LUCIEN BUONAPARTE'S COLLECTION, ETC.

*The Champion.*

January 22, 1815.

WE have been able to obtain access to the almost inaccessible collection of the Prince of Canino. The liberality with which the collections of foreign princes are thrown open to strangers and the public is often boasted of; but this liberality, we suppose, ceases when the same collections are exposed in this country for sale. The pictures of Lucien Buonaparte, which are valued at £40,000, are kept in most 'vile durance'; and even the ticket of admission, which we presented to a person who seems placed at the door to keep persons out, and not to let them in, was inspected and objected to with the same scrupulous jealousy as if it had been a bank-note presented in payment of the purchase-money of the collection. A cursory glance round the room was sufficient to explain the source of so much mystery and caution. The pictures are in general mere trash. Nor is the general dearth of attraction relieved by even a few examples of first-rate excellence. The only exception to these remarks which struck us was an exquisite female head by Leonardo da Vinci. It is one of the finest specimens we have seen of that great master, both for expression, drawing, the spirit and delicacy of the execution, and the preservation of the tone of colouring. There is in Leonardo's female heads a grace and charm of expression, which is peculiar to himself—a character of natural sweetness and playful tenderness, mixed up with the pride of conscious intellect, and with the graceful reserve of personal dignity. He blends purity with voluptuousness; and the expression of his women is equally characteristic of 'the mistress or the saint!' His pictures are always worked up to the utmost height of the idea he had conceived, with an elaborate felicity. No painter made more a religion of his art! His fault is, that his style of execution is too mathematical; that is, his pencil does not follow the graceful variety of nature, but substitutes certain refined gradations both of form and colour, producing equal changes in equal distances, with a mechanical uniformity. Leonardo was a man of profound learning as well as genius; and perhaps transferred too much of the formality of science to his favourite art. In making this objection, we have had in our eye two of the most celebrated pictures, the *Jocunda* in the Louvre, and the *St. John* in the possession of Mr. Hope. The picture in the present collection has more flexibility and

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variety ; as well as greater heightening of colour ; and perhaps the latter effect may be the cause of the former. It is not impossible that a certain degree of monotony may have been sometimes produced by the rubbing off of the higher tints and finishing touches of the pencil, so as to leave little more of the picture than the general ground-work.

To return to the collection before us. The only remaining pictures which can excite any interest are, some curious specimens of the early masters, Ghirlandaio, Bellino, and others ;—some small sketches of Titian ; a finely coloured Holy Family by the same master ; a portrait by Sebastian del Piombo ; a sketch of Diana and Acteon, by A. Caracci ; a landscape by Ruysdael ; and a transfiguration, said to be by Vasari. Besides these, there is a Frenchified Salvator Rosa, coloured pink and blue, a copy of Domenichino's head of St. Jerome, one or two pretended Claudes, and some *amatory* pictures of the modern French school. To these shall we add the picture of Lucien Buonaparte himself ? Nothing certainly can go beyond it in its way. It is the very *priggism* of portrait-painting.

We have already said something of the French style of portraits, and we shall here add a few remarks in explanation, though we are aware that any hints of a want of refinement will be thrown away on a nation so entirely *spirituel* as the French, and we are also afraid that some of our own artists may take credit to themselves for as many excellences, as we may charge their neighbours with defects.

The French systematically paint all objects as they would paint *still life* ; and hence they in general never paint any thing *but still life*. It is not possible to paint that which has life and motion by the same mechanical process by which that which has neither life nor motion may be represented. Thus it is not possible to imitate the human countenance, which is moveable and animated, as you would imitate a piece of drapery, or a chair, or a table, in which the physical appearance is every thing, and that appearance always remains the same. The industry of the eye and hand will go a great way in giving the effect of a number of parts of any external object, arranged in the same order ; but to give truth of effect to that which is always varying, and always expressive of more than strikes the senses, imagination and feeling are absolutely required. Whenever there is life and motion, life and motion become the principal things ; and any attempt to give these, without a distinct operation or feeling of the mind as to what constitutes their essence, by a mere attention to the physical form, or particular details, must necessarily destroy all appearance both of one and the other. To instance in expression only. This can only be given by being felt. Take for instance the

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outline of part of a face, and let it be so placed as to form part of the outline of a rock, or any other inanimate object. A copy of this, done with tolerable care, will seem to be the same thing: but let it be known that this is really a part of a human countenance, and then it will probably be found to be quite different *from the difference of expression*. We distinguish all objects more or less by habitual knowledge; and this knowledge is always acute in proportion to the interest excited, that is, to the intensity of the feeling or passion which is combined with the immediate impression on the senses. Expression is therefore only caught by sympathy; and it has been received as a maxim, that no painter can succeed in giving an expression which is totally foreign to his own character. There are some painters who cannot paint a wise man, and others who cannot paint a fool: some who cannot give strength, and others softness to their works. It is the want of character, of flexibility, and transient expression, which is the great defect of French portraits. Without the indications of the mind breathed into the countenance and moulding the features, the whole must appear stiff, hard, mean, unconnected, and lifeless—like the mask of a face, not like the face itself—forced, affected, and unnatural. Another consequence of this mode of copying the letter and leaving out the spirit of all objects, is that the face in general looks the least finished part of the picture, for while the other parts remain the same, this necessarily varies, and the only way to make up for the want of literal exactness, must be by seizing the force and animation of the expression. A head that does not look like life, cannot look like any thing else.—The portrait of Lucien Buonaparte is a striking confirmation of these remarks. We do not know how to describe it otherwise than by saying that it looks as if the artist had first modelled the face in wax, oiled it over, painted the lips purple, stuck on a pair of artificial eyebrows, and inserted a pair of dark blue glass eyes, and then set to work to copy every part of this perverse misrepresentation, with tedious and disgusting accuracy. In a portrait of the author of Charlemagne, one has a right to expect some refinement of intellect and feeling, if not the marks of elevated genius. No such thing. The picture has just the appearance of a spruce holiday mechanic, with all the hardness, littleness, and vulgarity of expression which is to be found in nature, where the countenance has not been expanded by thought and sentiment, and in art, where this expression has been entirely overlooked. The French artists themselves, both men and women, seem to be aware of the dilemma to which they are reduced, and prefer copying from plaster casts, or lay figures, to painting from the life; which baffles the mechanical minuteness and ‘laborious foolery’ of their style of art. They set

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about painting a face as they would about engraving a picture. This cannot possibly answer. From the general idea of the liveliness and volatility of the French character one would be apt to suppose, that instead of the method here described, their artists would have adopted the happier mode proposed by Pope in describing his characters of women :

'Come, then, the colours and the ground prepare,  
Dip in the rainbow, trick her off in air,  
Chuse a firm cloud, before it falls, and in it  
Catch, ere the change, the Cynthia of a minute !'

But the days of Watteau are over, and the plodding gravity of the Dutch has succeeded to the natural levity of French art. It is no wonder : for both proceed from a want of real concentration and force of intellect.<sup>1</sup>

There is another picture in this collection which we would recommend to the attention of all *whom it may concern*, as a most instructive lesson of the vanity of human pretensions, and the capriciousness of national taste. It is the historical picture of the return of Marcus Sextus, by Guerin, one of the most admired painters of the modern French school. This picture combines all the vices of that school in their most confirmed and aggravated state, and yet it drew, at the time when it was first exhibited in Paris, crowds of admirers, whose raptures were excited exactly in proportion as it flattered their habitual prejudices, and outraged every principle of common sense. It consists of three figures, that of the husband standing in front of the bed, the wife who lies dead upon it being behind him, and the daughter kneeling at his feet. Now all these figures seem as if they had been cut out of pasteboard, smeared over with putty to represent the shadows, and then stuck flat against the canvass to make a picture.

<sup>1</sup> When the writer of this article was in France twelve years ago, a young French artist began to copy in pencil a figure of the Virgin by Leonardo da Vinci. He returned to it day after day, and week after week. He was always there. He would first retouch an eyebrow or an eyelash, then do something to one of the fingers, then mark in a bit of the drapery, and then return to the face again. All this he did, sometimes leaning over the railing before the picture, sometimes sitting on a stool, mechanically screwed on to it, sometimes standing on one leg. He also relieved the monotony of his undertaking, by retiring to a small distance to compare his copy with the original, or shewed it to some one near him, or went round to look over others who were copying, or stood at the fire for an hour together, or loitered into the sculpture room, or walked round the gallery, and generally observed at his return that Poussin was excellent 'pour la composition,' Raphael 'pour l'expression,' Titian 'pour les beaux coloris,' but that David and his pupils united all these qualities to the fine forms of the antique. At the end of eleven weeks, we left him perfecting his copy. For anything we know, he may be at it still.

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This is not truth, nor invention, nor art, nor nature : but it is the French style of painting. Their pictures are sections of statues, or architectural elevations of the human figure. They have the effect neither of painting nor sculpture ; for painting has colour, and the appearance of substance, sculpture has real substance without colour ; but these have neither colour, substance, nor the appearance of it, but consist of mere lines. Whatever they may do, we cannot think this the highest style of history : because proceeding on arithmetical principles only, it wants two out of three of the physical requisites of the art of painting. The picture of Guérin is painted in strong contrast of light and shade, and ought to have proportionable prominence and relief. But from the habit of attending only to lines and detached parts, that is, of never combining the lesser masses into larger ones, or of contemplating the general appearance of nature, the whole effect is frittered away, and neither the prominent parts stand out, nor do the receding ones fall back. The same flat, imbecile, and dingy effect is produced, as by smearing white streaks upon a black ground, without knowledge or design, or reference to any actual object in nature. The drawing in this picture is equally characteristic of the general French style, and equally repulsive. It is not easy to explain the elaborate absurdity of the process : but it is in reality this. The painter has taken the figure of an antique statue for the figure of his hero. But finding that the position would not answer his purpose, he therefore gets a lay-figure made from a cast of this statue, and distorting it into the attitude he wants, places it against some object which props it up, with the two feet stretched out before it, as if it could neither move nor stand ; and this the artist calls painting history, and copying the ancients. This is what no other nation dare attempt. The expression which is given to these mockeries of art and nature, is of a piece with the rest. It is either copied tamely, servilely, and without effect, from the model before them, or if any thing is added to it, all grace and feeling is instantly lost in the extravagance of grimace and affectation. The ambition of these refiners on nature is like that of Pygmalion to give life and animation to a stone, but no miracle has yet come to their assistance.<sup>1</sup> The French are incapable of painting true history, for they are a people essentially without imagination, and without a knowledge of the passions that belong to it. All that is powerful in them, is imme-

<sup>1</sup> It is not correct to say that the French always colour from their casts. They sometimes rouge them over with a beautiful rose-colour, or cover their lay-figures with a flesh-coloured Nankin, like that which adorns the bodies of their opera dancers. We were at a loss to account for the colouring of David, till we heard of this contrivance. It is thus that these accomplished persons think to rival the hues of Titian and Correggio !

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diate sensation—the rest is either levity, or formality, or distortion. Take the picture of the deluge by Girodet. In this, a daughter is represented clinging to her mother by the hair of her head, the mother is clinging to the husband, he is at the same time supporting his father with his other arm, and is enabled to support the whole of this exquisite family groupe by taking hold of the branch of a tree which has just broken off by the weight. This effort of imagination almost equals the exploit of the clown in the pantomime, who contrives to balance a dozen men on one another's shoulders. If Poussin or Raphael had been fortunate enough to study in the central schools of Paris, what a difference would this new principle of grouping have introduced into their pictures of the Deluge and the Incendio del Borgo.

Before we quit this subject of French art, we would notice that there are two pictures of the Emperor Napoleon to be seen at present, one in Leicester-fields, which is very bad, and another in the Adelphi, by Lefebvre, which is tolerably good. The last is one of the best French portraits we have ever seen. The effect however is only good, very near, and is best when each part is seen through a magnifying glass. There is considerable character, firmness of drawing, and prominence in the features. Still it does not convey an adequate idea of the man. It is heavy, perplexed, and sullen, without sufficient fierceness or energy, and indeed without either the high or the bad qualities of the original. It has, notwithstanding, the appearance of being what is understood by a faithful likeness, and only wants that full development of the workings of the mind, which every portrait ought to have, and which, in a portrait like the present, would be invaluable.

## BRITISH INSTITUTION (1815)

*The Champion.*

*February 5, 12 and 19, 1815.*

THE Exhibition of this year, which opens to the public on Monday, is said to be inferior to the last :—that was said to be inferior to the one before it,—that to the preceding one, and so on. This is the common cant respecting all Exhibitions ; and the reason is obvious enough. We are naturally less struck by pictures of the same degree and class of excellence, by the same artists, on repetition than at first sight ; and the art appears to be retrograde, only because it is not progressive. Perhaps, however, there is some foundation for the objection in the present instance. At least, we think there is a falling-off in the historical department : though that is the depart-

ment of the art which would least bear any kind of retrenchment. We do not know whether to lay the blame of the deficiency on those artists, who have been away this summer on their visit to the French capital, or on those who have remained behind. The picture in this branch of the art which pleased us the most on looking into it, and which we conceive has decidedly the greatest number of excellent parts, though the general effect is very far from striking, is *Brutus exhorting the Romans to revenge the Death of Lucretia*, by C. I. Eastlake. The artist will excuse us, if we say that we think the principal figure, that of *Brutus*, by much the worst part of the picture. A more theatrical, and less impressive figure we have seldom seen. He is quite an orator of the modern stamp, and has nothing of the 'antique Roman' about him. He is not a bit better than any of the blustering, canting, vapid, Canning School, and is evidently an orator to be disposed of. We would advise Mr. Eastlake to take a hint from a high quarter, and get rid of him, at any rate. The effect of the attitude of this figure, which is represented pointing with a sword to the body of *Lucretia*, behind him, is almost entirely lost by the want of distinct foreshortening and prominent relief.<sup>1</sup> The figure of *Brutus* seems in a line with that of *Lucretia*. Indeed, the same defect pervades the whole picture, which is laid-in like mosaic, and the general pale, stone-colour appearance of the drapery, and of the flesh, adds to this effect. No one figure comes out before the rest to the eye, till by tracing it down to the feet, you find where it stands. The dead figure of *Lucretia* herself is a complete piece of marble. We wish to notice more particularly, because it is an excellence very rare in an English artist, that the attention to costume in the decorations of the bier on which the dead body lies, and in the other ornaments in the back-ground of the picture, gives an additional air of truth and consequently of interest to the scene. The peculiar merit of this composition is the great variety of distinct faces and characteristic expressions to be found in it. These, if not of a very high order, are at least much better than the pompous nonentities to which we are accustomed. There is very little of passion or emotion given or attempted, but we think the expression of attention in the surrounding audience is varied very happily, and with great truth of nature. The most picturesque and interesting part of the picture is the groupe in which a girl with a back-figure is supporting (we suppose) the mother of *Lucretia*. The expression of the countenance in the latter reminded us of Annibal Caracci, and we are always glad to be reminded of him. Certainly the same effect was not produced upon our minds by the

<sup>1</sup> A radical objection to it, in point of composition, is, that it is addressing the spectator, and has its back turned to the audience.

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boy in the fore-ground, with sandy hair and weak eyes, who is crying so piteously : still less did we like the figure of a man in the right hand corner, who is explaining the story to another with his fists clenched, and in a boxing attitude. The model for a Roman warrior is as little to be sought in a Fives Court, as of a Roman patriot in a debating society, or even (with leave be it spoken) in an English House of Commons. We have dwelt the longer on this picture, because its immediate effect on the eye is by no means in proportion to its real merit. The drab-coloured quakerism of the tone conceals it from observation almost as much as if it had a veil over it. We do not really understand the object of these sickly half-hints, which all French artists, and some of our own, affect. Nicolas Poussin, who had no relief of light and shade, had strong contrasts of colour ; or even if he had had neither, the great distinctness of his outline, and his striking manner of telling the story, might still have formed a sufficient excuse for him. In short, the style of colouring adopted in this picture may, for aught we know, accord very well with some more artificial and recondite style of historical composition ; but we are sure, it has nothing to do with natural expression, or immediate effect.

It has been said, that ‘ a great book is a great evil.’ We think the same thing might be applied to pictures : or at least we should not instance the large picture in this collection of *The Burial of our Lord*, by C. Coventry, as an exception to the rule. We admit, however, that the face, dress, and figure of the old man holding the drapery over Christ, are picturesque, and in the fine manner of Rembrandt. The attitude and action of this figure are exactly the same as those of a similar figure in Mr. Bird’s picture of the same subject. This is rather a singular coincidence in two pictures exhibited at the same time, and which it is therefore improbable to suppose could have been copied one from the other. The other figures about Christ we cannot bring ourselves to admire : they resemble painted wood. The colour of the Christ is a livid purple, the worst of all possible colours. The women are better ; though the fine turn in the waist of one of them is not in the best style of history, which does not profess to exhibit women of fashion.

Mr. Bird’s picture of *The Entombment of Christ*, is, we conceive, very inferior to his picture last year of *Job and his Friends*. The colouring is equally bad, and the composition is not equally good. There is one pretty figure of a girl, but her prettiness is not an advantage to the subject. In all things, ‘ It is place which lessens and sets off.’ Mr. Bird constantly introduces the extremities of the hands and feet into his pictures, only to show how ill he can paint

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them. The picture of *The Surrender of Calais* has been already before the public.

Among the historical pictures, we suppose from its name, we must rank that of the *Prophet Ezra*, by G. Hayter, though it does not appear to us to belong to the class. It is a fine, rich, and strongly painted picture of a man reading a book. The being able to copy nature with truth and effect is not history, though we think it is the first step to it. In this picture, which we believe is a first essay, Mr. Hayter has not redeemed the pledge he gave in his miniatures. If we could paint such miniatures as he does, we would do nothing but paint miniatures always; and laugh at the advertisements of great historical pictures in the newspapers. The *St. Bernard*, by the same artist, is very indifferent.

Mr. Harlowe's *Hubert and Arthur* is the greatest piece of coxcombry and absurdity we remember to have seen. We do not think that any one who pleases has a right to paint a libel on Shakespeare.

The generality of the historical pictures in the gallery are such as have been always painted, and as will always be painted, in spite of all that can be said to the contrary, and therefore it is as well to say nothing about them.

Miss Jackson's *Mars subdued by Peace* is a very pleasing composition. Both the face and expression of the figure of *Peace* are those of a very beautiful and interesting girl, though from the tender pensiveness of the features she seems rather as if sending *Mars* out to battle than disarming him; and as to the God of War himself, he does not look like one whom 'deep scars of thunder have intrenched,' but as if he had been kept a long time at home in a lady's chamber. The Cupids (when Ladies imagine Cupids, what can they be less?) are very nice, little, chubby fellows.

There are two pictures of *The Sick Pigeon* and *The Favourite Kitten* by Miss Geddes, both of which we like, gallantry out of the question. The kitten in the last is exquisitely painted. You may almost hear it *purring*.

Among the foreign contributors to this department we ought to mention *Music*, by M. Messori, in the manner of the early Italian masters, and *Devotion*, a small picture by J. Laschallas, which is hung almost out of sight, and which, if it were hung a little lower, we suspect, would be found to be 'a good picture and a true.'

To the scene from the *Marriage of Figaro*, by Chalon, no praise of ours could add the slightest grace or lustre. We wonder where he got the figure of his *Susan*, or how he dared to paint her!

In the domestic scenes, and views of interiors, &c., this exhibition

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is much like the former ones, except that we miss Collins, and find no one to replace him.

Of the landscapes, Burnett's, Fielding's, Nasmyth's, Hofland's, and Glover's are the best. In Mr. Glover's large picture of *Jacob and Laban* (which we believe was exhibited and much admired in Paris), there is a want of harmony and lightness in the whole : but there is a groupe of trees in the fore-ground, which Claude himself would not have disdained to borrow. Mr. Hofland's landscapes, without being much finished, have the look, the tone, and freshness of nature. The *View of Edinburgh* is, we think, the best. Some of the others are too much abstractions of aerial perspective : they are naked and cold, and represent not the objects of nature so much as the medium through which they are seen. We will only add, in our professional capacity, that this gentleman's pictures shew themselves, and that he need not be at the trouble of shewing them. Nasmyth's pictures are not too much finished, but they want a certain breadth, which nature always adds to perfect finishing. Fielding is a new and most promising artist, of whom we mean to say more. Of the two Burnetts, we shall only remark at present, that they have made no addition to their live-stock since last year, which consisted then, as it does now, of one black, one yellow, and one spotted cow.

*Cottage Child at Breakfast*, W. Collins, A.R.A. This is a pleasing little picture, but inferior to Mr. Collins's general performances. The shadow cast on the wall is like plaster of a darker colour, nor should we have suspected it to be meant for shadow, had it not been pointed out to us. *Reapers*, by the same artist, is a still greater falling off. The mixture of minute finishing and slovenliness in the execution, and of blues and yellows in the colouring of this picture is to us very unaccountable.

*Devotion*, J. Laschallas. We wish that we could conjure this little picture out of its frame to have a nearer view. The drawing, expression, tone, and composition appear to us admirable.

*A Scolding Wife ; her Husband having spent all his Money at the Fair*, L. Cossé. This is not a very pleasant subject, nor very pleasantly treated. The little child blowing the trumpet is the pretty part of the picture. There is one figure of a woman in a blue stuff gown, sitting by the fire-side, in an attitude of yawning, which both for the truth of the colouring and the action, is inimitable.

*A Country Scene*, by the same, has the hard brickdusty tone which there is in the faces of the other picture ; but the expression is natural and good.

*A Colour-Grinder*, R. T. Bone, is a spirited and faithful imitation of nature.

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*A Study from Nature*, J. Harrison, is a well-painted head. At the same time, there is something about it very unpleasant to us.

*Hebe and Sunrise*, by H. Howard, R.A., were, we believe, in last year's Exhibition at Somerset-house. There is a certain grace and elegance in both of them. The fantastic, playful lightness of the figures in the last is perhaps carried to a degree of affectation. The faces of the Pleiades are very pretty and very insipid.

*Conrade and Gulnare*, H. Singleton. We could neither understand this picture nor the lines from Lord Byron's *Corsair*, which are intended to explain the subject of it.

*Brutus exhorting the Romans to revenge the Death of Lucretia*. Of this composition we find we have already said quite enough.

*View of Arthur's Seat near Edinburgh*, P. Nasmyth, is a very nicely painted landscape. We like all this gentleman's landscapes, except *A View of Edinburgh*, which is just like a painting on a tea-board.

*Breaking the Ice*, by James Burnett, is a very delightful picture. It has the effect of walking out in a fine winter's morning. Many incidental associations are very happily introduced; the pigeons collected on the thatch of a shed, and the robin-redbreast perched in a window of an out house. The pigeons are, however, too small, and the colour on the breast of the robin is on fire. Perhaps these objections are too minute. The pigeon-house looks suspended in the air, and the sky and branches of the trees seen against it are painted with admirable brilliancy. *Peasants going to Market*, by the same artist, is of equal merit. The skirt of the drapery of the peasant girl looks as if the sun shone directly upon it. The docks in the foreground of the picture are very highly finished, and touched with great spirit, but we never saw this kind of plant of the lightish green colour which is here given to it.

*Milking*, by John Burnett, is a very brilliant little picture. The red dress of the girl at the milk-pail is as rich as possible. The trees at a little distance are too much in sharp points and touches. The cattle in the landscapes of both the painters of this name are too much in heavy masses, and form too violent a contrast to the lightness of the landscape about them.

*The Watering Place*, P. H. Rogers, deserves considerable praise, both for the colouring and composition.

*Banks of the Thames*, J. Wilson, is a very clever picture. The foreground and the distance are equally well painted; but they do not appear in keeping. The one is quite clear, and the other covered with haze.

*Morning*, and *View from Rydal Woods*, by C. V. Fielding, are both masterly performances. The last, in particular, is a rich, mellow

landscape, and presents a fine, woody, and romantic scene, which in some degree calls off our admiration from the merit of the artist to the beauties of nature. This is a sacrifice of self-love which many of our artists do not seem willing to make. They too often chuse their subjects, not to exhibit the charms of nature, but to display their own skill in making something of the most barren subjects.

We think this objection applies to Mr. Hofland's landscapes in general. The scene he selects is represented with great truth and felicity of pencil, but it is, generally speaking, one we should neither wish to look at, nor to be in. In his *Loch-Lomond* and *Stirling Castle*, the effect of the atmosphere is finely given; but this is all. We wish to enter our protest against this principle of separating *the imitation* from *the thing imitated*, particularly as it is countenanced by the authority of the ablest landscape painter of the present day, of whose landscapes some one said, that 'they were pictures of nothing, and very like!'

*Battle-piece*, B. Barker, is a spirited sketch, harmoniously coloured. In force of drawing and expression, it is inferior to *The Standard*, by Ab. Cooper. There is too violent an opposition of white and black in the horses in this picture; and the eye does not immediately connect the heads of the animals with the rest of their bodies. This picture, however, displays great knowledge of the subject, and considerable strength of composition. *A Study from Nature*, by the same artist, Ab. Cooper, is a masterly little picture. *Birds*, from nature, and *Plovers*, from nature, by M. Chantry, are both excellent in their kind.

*View of Richmond, Yorkshire*, by W. Westall, A.R.A., is deficient in perspective and in other respects. The river below seems to be on a level with the high foreground from which it is seen. The representing declivities by means of aerial perspective is, we believe, one of the difficulties of the art, and we do not remember any successful instances of it, except in some of Wilson's landscapes.

*A Boy lamenting the Death of his Favourite Rabbit*, W. Davison, is a very pleasing composition in the style of Gainsborough. The landscape has too much the blue greenish hue and slender execution of Gainsborough's backgrounds. The boy is well painted. There is a picture of this kind by Murillo in the collection at Dulwich, which we would earnestly recommend to every painter of such subjects. Or we might as well, in other words, recommend them to look at nature.

*Forest Scene*, by J. Stark, is painted with great truth of colour and effect.

*Stacking Hay*, P. Dewint, has great merit.

## ON MR. WILKIE'S PICTURES

*Jacob taking charge of the Flocks and Herds of Laban*, J. Glover. We have already spoken of this picture. The group of tall green trees in the foreground is excellent, but there is a leaden tone spread over the rest of the picture, which is neither gratifying to the eye, nor true to nature.

*The Emperor Alexander, in his Droschi*, by A. Sauerweide, is like all the other pictures, busts, &c. we have seen of him, and not at all like the descriptions we have heard of his fine person and countenance.

*The Duke of Wellington attacking the Rear of Marshal Soult's Army on the Pont de Miserali over the Great fall of Salamondi, and pursuing them through the Passes of the Sierra Morone in Portugal*, 1809, from a sketch by Major-General Hawker, by Perry Nursey. This is not a good picture; but it gives one a good idea of the sport which is to be found in this sort of royal game. In looking at it we have something like ocular demonstration of the truth of what Cowper, the poet, says—

' War is a game, which were their subjects wise,  
Kings would not play at ! '

## ON MR. WILKIE'S PICTURES

*The Champion.*

March 5, 1815.

IN one of Archbishop Herring's letters, written during a tour in Wales, is the following very picturesque description of a scene at an inn. ' I set out upon this adventurous journey on a Monday morning, accompanied (as bishops usually are) by my chancellor, my chaplain, secretary, two or three friends, and our servants. The first part of our road lay across the foot of a long ridge of rocks, and was over a dreary morass, with here and there a small dark cottage, a few sheep and more goats in view, but not a bird to be seen, save, now and then, a solitary hern, watching for frogs. At the end of four of their miles, we got to a small village, where the view of things mended a little, and the road and the time were beguiled by travelling for three miles along the side of a fine lake, full of fish, and transparent as glass. That pleasure over, our work became very arduous, for we were to mount a rock, and in many places of the road, over natural stairs of stone. I submitted to this, which, they told me, was but a taste of the country, and to prepare me for worse things to come. However, worse things did not come that morning, for we dined soon after out of our own wallets; and though our inn stood in a place of the most frightful solitude, and the best formed for the

## ON MR. WILKIE'S PICTURES

habitation of monks (who once possessed it) in the world, yet we made a cheerful meal. The novelty of the thing gave me spirits, and the air gave me appetite, much keener than the knife I ate with. We had our music too; for there came in a harper, who soon drew about us a group of figures, that Hogarth would give any price for. The harper was in his true place and attitude; a man and a woman stood before him, singing to his instrument wildly, but not disagreeably; a little dirty child was playing with the bottom of the harp; a woman, in a sick night-cap, hanging over the stairs; a boy with crutches, fixed in a staring attention, and a girl carding wool in the chimney and rocking a cradle with her naked feet, interrupted in her business by the charms of the music; all ragged and dirty, and all silently attentive. These figures gave us a most entertaining picture, and would please you, or any man of observation; and one reflection gave me particular comfort, that the assembly before us demonstrated, that, even here, the influential sun warmed poor mortals, and inspired them with love and music.'

The figures in this description form a very striking group, and we should like much to see them transferred to the canvass. Those of the girl with naked feet rocking the cradle, the little child playing with the bottom of the harp, and the man and woman singing wildly before it are the most beautiful. There is one observation made by the writer to which we do not assent, that the figures are such as Hogarth would have given any price for. We doubt whether he would have meddled with them at all, for there was no one who understood his own powers better, or more seldom went out of his way. His *forte* was satire, he painted the follies or vices of men, and we do not know that there is a single picture of his, containing a representation of merely natural or domestic scenery. The subject described in the passage we have given above would have exactly suited an excellent painter of the present day, we mean Mr. Wilkie; and would indeed form a very delightful companion to his Blind Fiddler. With all our admiration of this last-mentioned composition, we think the story described by the bishop clearly has the poetry on its side.

The highest authority on art in this country, we understand, has pronounced that Mr. Wilkie united the excellences of Hogarth to those of Teniers. We demur to this decision, in both its branches; but in demurring to authority, it is necessary to give our reasons. We conceive that this excellent and deservedly admired artist has certain essential, real, and indisputable excellences of his own; and we think it, therefore, the less important to clothe him with any vicarious merits, which do not belong to him.

## ON MR. WILKIE'S PICTURES

Mr. Wilkie's pictures, generally speaking, derive almost their whole merit from their *reality*, or the truth of the representation. They are works of pure imitative art, and the test of this style of composition is to represent nature, faithfully and happily, in its simplest combinations. It may be said of an artist, like Mr. Wilkie, that *nothing human is indifferent to him*. His mind takes an interest in, and it gives an interest to, the most familiar scenes and transactions of life. He professedly gives character, thought, and passion in their lowest degrees, and every-day forms. He selects the commonest events and appearances of nature for his subjects; and trusts to their very commonness for the interest and amusement he is to excite. Mr. Wilkie is a serious, prosaic, literal narrator of facts, and his pictures may be considered as diaries, or minutes of what is passing constantly about us. Hogarth, on the contrary, is essentially a comic painter; his pictures are not indifferent, unimpassioned descriptions of human nature, but rich, exuberant satires upon it. He is carried away by a passion for the *ridiculous*. His object is 'to shew vice her own feature, scorn her own image.' He is so far from contenting himself with still life, that he is always on the verge of caricature, though without ever falling into it. He does not represent folly or vice in its incipient, or dormant, or *grub* state, but full grown, with wings, pampered into all sorts of affectation, airy, ostentatious, and extravagant. Folly is there seen at the height—the moon is at the full—it is 'the very error of the time.' There is a perpetual collision of eccentricities—a tilt and tournament of absurdities—the prejudices and caprices of mankind are let loose, and set together by the ears, as in a bear-garden. Hogarth paints nothing but comedy, or tragic-comedy. Wilkie paints neither one nor the other. Hogarth never looks at any object but to find out a moral or a ludicrous effect. Wilkie never looks at any object but to see that it is there. Hogarth's pictures are a perfect jest-book from one end to the other. We do not remember a single joke in Wilkie's, except one very bad one of the boy in *The Blind Fiddler*, scraping the gridiron, or fire-shovel, we forget which.<sup>1</sup> In looking at Hogarth, you are ready to burst your sides with laughing at the unaccountable jumble of odd things, which are brought together: you look at Wilkie's pictures with a mingled feeling of curiosity and admiration at the accuracy of the representation. For instance, there is a most admirable head of a man coughing in *The Rent-Day*: the action, the keeping, the choaked sensation are inimitable: but there is nothing to laugh at in a man coughing. What strikes the mind is the difficulty of a man's

<sup>1</sup> The waiter drawing the cork in the *Rent-day*, is another exception, and quite Hogarthian.

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being painted coughing, which here certainly is a master-piece of art. But turn to the black-guard cobbler in the Election Dinner, who has been smutting his neighbour's face over, and who is lolling his tongue out at the joke with a most surprising obliquity of vision, and immediately 'your lungs begin to crow like chanticleer.' Again, there is the little boy crying in *The Cut Finger*, who only gives you the idea of a cross, disagreeable, obstinate child in pain : whereas the same face in Hogarth's *Noon*, from the ridiculous perplexity it is in, and its extravagant, noisy, unfelt distress at the accident of having let fall the pye-dish, is quite irresistible. Mr. Wilkie in his picture of the Ale-house door, we believe, painted Mr. Liston as one of the figures, without any great effect. Hogarth would have given any price for such a subject, and would have made it worth any money. We have never seen any thing, in the expression of comic humour, equal to Hogarth's pictures, but Liston's face !

We have already remarked that we did not think Hogarth a fit person to paint a romantic scene in Wales. In fact, we know no one who had a less pastoral imagination. Mr. Wilkie paints interiors : but still you always connect them with the country. Hogarth, even when he paints people in the open air, represents them either as coming from London, as in the polling for votes at Brentford, or as returning to it, as the dyer and his wife at Bagnigge Wells. In this last picture he has contrived to convert a common rural image into a type and emblem of city cuckoldom. He delights in the thick of St. Giles's or St. James's. His pictures breathe a certain close greasy tavern air. The fare he serves up to us consists of high-seasoned dishes, ragouts and olla podridas, like the supper in *Gil Blas*, which it requires a strong stomach to digest. Mr. Wilkie presents us with a sort of lenten fare, very good and wholesome, but rather insipid than overpowering.<sup>1</sup>

As an artist, Mr. Wilkie is not at all equal to Teniers. Neither in truth and brilliant clearness of colouring, nor in facility of execution, is there any comparison. Teniers was a perfect master in both these respects, and our own countryman is positively defective, notwithstanding the very laudable care with which he finishes every part of his pictures. There is an evident smear and dragging of the paint, which is also of a bad purple, or puttyish tone, and which never appear in the pictures of the Flemish artist, any more than in a looking-glass. Teniers, probably from his facility of execution, succeeded in giving a more local and momentary expression to his

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Wilkie's pictures are in general much better painted than Hogarth's : but the *Marriage à-la-mode* is superior both in colour and execution to any of Wilkie's.

## THE ELGIN MARBLES

figures. They seem each going on with his particular amusement or occupation; while Wilkie's have in general more a look of sitting for their pictures. Their compositions are very different also: and in this respect, perhaps, Mr. Wilkie has the advantage. Teniers's boors are usually amusing themselves at skittles, or dancing, or drinking, or smoking, or doing what they like in a careless desultory way; and so the composition is loose and irregular. Wilkie's figures are all drawn up in a regular order, and engaged in one principal action, with occasional episodes. The story of the Blind Fiddler is the most interesting, and the best told. The two children before the musician are delightful. The Card-players is the best coloured of his pictures, if we are not mistaken. The Politicians, though excellent as to character and composition, is inferior as a picture to those which Mr. Wilkie has since painted. His latest pictures, however, do not appear to us to be his best. There is something of manner and affectation in the grouping of the figures, and a pink and rosy colour spread over them, which is out of place. The hues of Rubens and Sir Joshua do not agree with Mr. Wilkie's subjects. The picture which he has just finished of Distraining for Rent is very highly spoken of by those who have seen it. We must here conclude this very general account; for to point out the particular beauties of any one of our artist's pictures, would require a long article by itself.

## THE ELGIN MARBLES<sup>1</sup>

*The Examiner.*

June 16, 1816.

THE Elgin Marbles are the best answer to Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses. Considered in that point of view, they are invaluable: in any other, they are not worth so much as has been said. Nothing remains of them but their style; but that is everything, for it is the style of nature. Art is the imitation of nature; and the Elgin Marbles are in their essence and their perfection casts from nature,—from fine nature, it is true, but from real, living, moving nature; from objects in nature, answering to an idea in the artist's mind, not from an idea in the artist's mind abstracted from all objects in nature. Already these Marbles have produced a revolution in our artists' minds, and Mr. West says, in his practice: the venerable President makes an express distinction in their favour between *dignified* art and *systematic* art. Mr. Chantry considers simplicity and grandeur so nearly

<sup>1</sup> Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Elgin Marbles.—MURRAY.

## THE ELGIN MARBLES

united in them, that it is almost impossible to separate them. Sir Thomas Lawrence in returning from the Elgin Marbles to his own house, where he has casts of the finest antiques, was struck with the greater degree of ease and nature in the former. Mr. Flaxman alone holds out for the *ideal*. The whole of his evidence on this subject is, indeed, quite ideal: Mr. Payne Knight's evidence is *learned* evidence.—It is to be hoped, however, that these Marbles with the name of Phidias thrown into the scale of common sense, may lift the Fine Arts out of the Limbo of vanity and affectation into which they were conjured in this country about fifty years ago, and in which they have lain sprawling and fluttering, gasping for breath, wasting away, vapid and abortive ever since,—the shadow of a shade. The benefit of high examples of Art, is to prevent the mischievous effect of bad ones. A true theory of Art does not advance the student one step in practice, one hair's-breadth nearer the goal of excellence: but it takes the fetters from off his feet, and loosens the bandages from his eyes. We lay somewhat more stress on the value of the Fine Arts than Mr. Payne Knight, who considers them (we know not for what reason) as an elegant antithesis to morality. We think they are nearly related to it. All morality seems to be little more than keeping people out of mischief, as we send children to school; and the Fine Arts are in that respect a school of morality. They bribe the senses into the service of the understanding: they kill Time, the great enemy of man; they employ the mind usefully—about nothing; and by preventing *ennui*, promote the chief ends of virtue. A taste for the Fine Arts also, in periods of luxury and refinement, not ill supplies the place of religious enthusiasm. It feeds our love and admiration of the grand, the good, the beautiful. What is the respect which is felt for the names of Raphael, of Michael Angelo, of Phidias, of Homer and of Milton, but a sort of hero worship, only with this difference, that in the one case we pay an indistinct homage to the powers of the mind, whereas the worshippers of Theseus and Hercules deified the powers and virtues of the body?

With respect to the tendency of the works here collected to promote the Fine Arts in this country, though not so sanguine as some persons, or even as the Committee of the House of Commons, we are not without our hopes.—The only possible way to improve the taste for art in a country, is by a collection of standing works of established reputation, and which are capable by the sanctity of their name of overawing the petulance of public opinion. This result can never be produced by the encouragement given to the works of contemporary artists. The public ignorance will much sooner debauch them than they will reform the want of taste in the public. But where works

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of the highest character and excellence are brought forward in a manner due to their merits, and rendered accessible to the public, though they may do little for the national genius, it is hard if they do not add something to the public taste. In this way also they may react upon the production of original excellence. It was in this point of view that the Gallery of the Louvre was of the greatest importance not only to France, but to Europe. It was a means to civilise the world. There Art lifted up her head and was seated on her throne, and said, All eyes shall see me, and all knees shall bow to me. Honour was done to her and all hers. There was her treasure, and there the inventory of all she had. There she had gathered together all her pomp, and there was her shrine, and there her votaries came and worshipped as in a temple. The crown she wore was brighter than that of kings. Where the triumphs of human liberty had been, there were the triumphs of human genius. For there, in the Louvre, were the precious monuments of art ;—there ‘ stood the statue that enchants the world ’ ; there was the *Apollo*, the *Laocoon*, the *Dying Gladiator*, the *Head of the Antinous*, *Diana* with her *Fawn*, the *Muses* and the *Graces* in a ring, and all the glories of the antique world :—

‘ There was old Proteus coming from the sea,  
And wreathed Triton blew his winding horn.’

There, too, were the two *St. Jeromes*, Correggio’s and Domenichino’s ; there was Raphael’s *Transfiguration*, the *St. Mark* of Tintoret, Paul Veronese’s *Marriage of Cana*, the *Deluge* of Nicholas Poussin, and Titian’s *St. Peter Martyr* ;—all these and more than these, of which the world was not worthy. The worshippers of hereditary power and native imbecility wanted at first to destroy these monuments of human genius, which give the eternal lie to their creed ; they did not dare to do that, they have dispersed them, and they have done well. They were an insult to the assembled majesty of hereditary power and native imbecility, both in the genius that had produced them, and that had acquired them ; and *it was fit that they should be removed*. They were an obstacle in the way, in case the great Duke should have to teach the great nation another great moral lesson by the burning of Paris, which has been a favourite object with some persons since the year 1792, and with others later ; and *it was fit that they should be removed*. The French themselves did not think proper to defend what they had dearly bought with their blood, shed for their country, and *it was fit that they should be removed*. Besides these reasons, there were no others for their removal. The reason assigned in the Duke of Wellington’s letter, that the works of art should be sacred to conquerors, and an heirloom of the soil that gives them birth, is quite

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apocryphal. Half of the works brought from Italy had been originally brought there from Greece. If works of art are to be a sort of fixtures in every country, why are the Elgin Marbles brought here, for our artists to strut and fret over this acquisition to our 'glorious country'? If the French were not to retain their collection of perfect works of art, why should we be allowed to make one of still higher pretensions under pretence of carrying off only fragments and rubbish? The Earl of Elgin brought away the Theseus and the Neptune as bits of architecture, as loose pieces of stone; but no sooner do they get into the possession of our glorious country, than they are discovered to be infinitely superior to the *Apollo*, the *Venus*, and the *Laocoon*, and all the rest of that class, which are found out to be no better than *modern antiques*. All this may be true, but it is truth with a suspicious appearance. If works of art are contemplated with peculiar interest on the spot which gave them birth, surely Athens has charms for the eyes of learning and taste as well as Rome. If there is something classical in the very air of Venice, of Antwerp, and of Rotterdam, surely there is an air at Athens which is breathed nowhere else.

If this reasoning would apply to such works in their perfect state, it does so still more in their approaches to decay and ruin, for then the local interest belonging to them becomes the principal impression. Lord Elgin appears not to have had the slightest authority for bringing away these statues, except a *fermaun* or permission from the Turkish Government to bring away pieces of stone from the ruins of the Parthenon, which he paid 21,000 piastres to the Governor of Athens for permission to interpret as he pleased. That it was not meant to apply to the statues, and only to fragments of the buildings, is also evident from this, that Lord Elgin had originally, and at the time the *fermaun* was granted, no intention, as he himself says, of bringing away the statues. Lord Aberdeen approves of bringing them away, because otherwise the French might have got them. In what we have said, we do not blame Lord Elgin for what he has done; all our feelings run the contrary way. We only blame cant and hypocrisy: we only blame those who blame others, and yet would do the very same things themselves. There does not appear to be any evidence that these statues were done by Phidias. It seems extremely probable, however, that they were done by persons under his direction, and in a style that he approved. What that style is, and what the principles of art are which are to be derived from it, we shall briefly attempt to state in another article on this interesting subject.

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### THE CATALOGUE RAISONNÉ OF THE BRITISH INSTITUTION

*The Examiner.*

November 3, 1816.

WE will lay odds that this is a fellow 'damned in a fair face;' with white eyes and eye-brows; of the colour of a Shrewsbury cake; a smooth tallow-skinned rascal, a white German sausage, a well-fed chitterling, from whose face Madame de —— would have turned away in disgust,—a transcendental stuffed man! We have no patience that the Arts should be catechised by a piece of whit-leather, a whey-face, who thinks that pictures, like the moon, should be made of green-cheese! Shall a roll of double tripe rise up in judgment on grace; shall a piece of dough talk of feeling? 'Tis too much. 'Sdeath, for Rembrandt to be demanded of a cheese-curd, what replication should he make? What might Vandyke answer to a jack-pudding, whose fingers are of a thickness at both ends? What should Rubens say, who 'lived in the rainbow, and played i' th' plighted clouds,' to a swaddling-clout, a piece of stockinet, of fleecy hosiery, to a squab man, without a bend in his body? What might Raphael answer to a joint-stool? Or Nicholas Poussin, charged in the presence of his *Cephalus and Aurora* with being a mere pedant, without grace or feeling, to this round-about machine of formal impertinence, this lumbering go-cart of dulness and spite? We could have wished that as the fellow stood before the portrait of Rembrandt, chattering like an ape, making mocks and mows at it, the picture had lifted up its *great grimy fist*, and knocked him down.

*The Catalogue Raisonné* of the British Institution is only worth notice, as it is pretty well understood to be a declaration of the views of the Royal Academy. It is a very dull, gross, impudent attack by one of its toad-eaters on human genius, on permanent reputation, and on liberal art. What does it say? Why, in so many words, that the knowledge of Art in this country is inconsistent with the existence of the Academy, and that their success as a body of men instituted for promoting and encouraging the Fine Arts, requires the destruction or concealment of all works of Art of great and acknowledged excellence. In this they may be right; but we did not think they would have come forward to say so themselves. Or that they would get a fellow, a low buffoon, a wretched Merry Andrew, a practical St. Giles's joker, a dirty Grub-Street critic, to vent his abominations on the *chef-d'œuvres* produced by the greatest painters that have gone before them, to paw them over with his bleared-eyes, to smear the filth and ordure of his tongue upon them,

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to spit at them, to point at them, to nickname them, to hoot at them, to make mouths at them, to shrug up his shoulders and run away from them, like a blackguard who affects to make a bugbear of every one he meets in the street; to play over again in the presence of these divine guests the nauseous tricks of one of Swift's Yahoos—and for what? Avowedly for the purpose of diverting the public mind from the contemplation of all that genius and art can boast in the lapse of ages, and to persuade the world that there is nothing in Art that has been or ever will be produced worth looking at but the gilt frames and red curtains at the Exhibition of the Royal Academy! We knew before that they had no great genius for the Arts; but we thought they might have some love of them in their hearts. They here avow their rankling jealousy, hatred and scorn, of all Art and of all the great names in Art, and as a bold put indeed, require the keeping down of the public taste as the only means of keeping up the bubble of their reputation. They insist that their only hope of continued encouragement and support with a *discerning public* is in hood-winking that public, in confining their highest notions of Art to their own gross and superficial style of daubing, and in vilifying all works of standard genius.—This is right English. The English are a shop-keeping nation, and the Royal Academy are a society of hucksters in the Fine Arts, who are more tenacious of their profits as chapmen and dealers, than of the honour of the Art. The day after the *Catalogue Raisonné* was published, the Prince Regent, in the name and on behalf of his Father, should have directed it to be burned by the hands of the hangman of their Committee, or, upon refusal, have shut up their shop. A society for the encouragement and promotion of Art has no right to exist at all, from the moment that it professes to exist only in wrong of Art, by the suppression of the knowledge of Art, in contempt of genius in Art, in defiance of all manly and liberal sentiment in Art. But this is what the Royal Academy professes to do in the *Catalogue Raisonné*.

The Academy, from its commencement and up to the present hour, is in fact a mercantile body, like any other mercantile body, consisting chiefly of manufacturers of portraits, who have got a regular monopoly of this branch of trade, with a certain rank, style, and title of their own, that is, with the King's privilege to be thought Artists and men of genius,—and who, with the jealousy natural to such bodies, supported by authority from without, and by cabal within, think themselves bound to crush all generous views and liberal principles of Art, lest they should interfere with their monopoly and their privilege to be thought Artists and men of genius. The Academy is the Royal road to Art. The whole style of English Art, as issuing from this

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Academy, is founded on a principle of appeal to the personal vanity and ignorance of their sitters, and of accommodation to the lucrative pursuits of the Painter, in a sweeping attention to effect in painting, by which means he can cover so many more whole or half lengths in each season. The Artists have not time to finish their pictures, or if they had, the effect would be lost in the superficial glare of that hot room, where nothing but rouged cheeks, naked shoulders, and Ackermann's dresses for May, can catch the eye in the crowd and bustle and rapid succession of meretricious attractions, as they do in another hot room of the same equivocal description. Yet they complain in one part of the Catalogue, that 'they (the Academicians) are forced to come into a hasty competition every year with works that have stood the test of ages.' It is for that very reason, among others, that it was proper to exhibit the works at the British Institution, to shew to the public, and by that means to make the Academicians feel, that the securing the applause of posterity and a real rank in the Art, which that alone can give, depended on the number of pictures they finished, and not on the number they began. It is this which excites the apprehensions of the cabal; for if the eye of the public should be once spoiled by the Old Masters, the necessity of doing something like them might considerably baulk the regularity of their returns. Why should they complain of being forced into this premature competition? Who forces them to bring forward so many pictures yearly before they are fit to be seen? Would they have taken more pains, more time to finish them, to work them up to that fastidious standard of perfection, on which they have set their minds, if they had not been hurried into this unfair competition with the British Institution, 'sent to their account with all their imperfections on their heads, unhouseled, unanointed, unanealed?' Would they have done a single stroke more to any one picture, if the Institution had never been opened? No such thing. It is not then true, that this new and alarming competition prevents them from finishing their works, but it prevents them from imposing them on the public as finished. *Pingo in eternitatem*, is not their motto. There are three things which constitute the art of painting, which make it interesting to the public, which give it permanence and rank among the efforts of human genius. They are, first, *gusto* or expression: *i.e.* the conveying to the eye the impressions of the soul, or the other senses connected with the sense of sight, such as the different passions visible in the countenance, the romantic interest connected with scenes of nature, the character and feelings associated with different objects. In this, the highest and first part of art, the Italian painters, particularly Raphael, Correggio,

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&c., excel. The second is the *picturesque*; that is, the seizing on those objects, or situations and accidents of objects, as light and shade, &c. which make them most striking to the mind as objects of sight only. This is the *forte* of the Flemish and Venetian painters, Titian, Paul Veronese, Rubens, Vandyke, Rembrandt, and they have carried this part of the art as high as it can go, some of them with more, some of them with less of the former excellence. The third is the exact and laborious imitation of natural objects, such as they exist in their component parts, with every variety and nicety of detail, the pencil performing the part of a microscope, and there being no necessity for expression or the picturesque in the object represented, or anything but truth in the representation. In this least interesting but still curious and ingenious part of the Art, the Dutch School have been allowed to excel, though with little of the former qualities, which indeed are not very much wanted for this purpose. Now in all these three the English School are notoriously deficient and they are so for these following reasons:—

They cannot paint *gusto*, or high expression, for it is not in the national character. At least, it must be sought in Nature; but our Painters do not go out of their way in search of character and expression—their sitters come to them in crowds; and they come to them not to be painted in all the truth of character and expression, but to be *flattered* out of all meaning; or they would no longer come in crowds. To please generally, the Painter must exaggerate what is generally pleasing, obvious to all capacities, and void of offence before God and man, the shewy, the superficial, and the insipid, that which strikes the greatest number of persons with the least effort of thought; and he must suppress all the rest; all that might be ‘to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Gentiles foolishness.’ The Exhibition is a successful experiment on the ignorance and credulity of the town. They collect ‘a quantity of barren spectators’ to judge of Art, in their corporate and public capacity, and then each makes the best market he can of them in his own. A Royal Academician must not ‘hold the mirror up to Nature,’ but make his canvass ‘the glass of fashion, and the mould of form.’ The ‘numbers without number’ who pay thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred guineas for their pictures in large, expect their faces to come out of the Painter’s hands smooth, rosy, round, smiling; just as they expect their hair to come out of the barber’s curled and powdered. It would be a breach of contract to proceed in any other way. A fashionable Artist and a fashionable hair-dresser have the same common principles of theory and practice; the one fits his customers to appear with *éclat* in a ball-room, the other in the Great Room of

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the Royal Academy. A certain dexterity, and a knowledge of the prevailing fashion, are all that is necessary to either. An Exhibition-portrait is, therefore, an essence, not of character, but of commonplace. It displays not high thought and fine feeling, but physical well-being, with an outside label of health, ease, and competence. Yet the Catalogue-writer talks of the dignity of modern portrait! To enter into a general obligation to paint the passions or characters of men, must, where there are none, be difficult to the artist; where they are bad, be disagreeable to his employers. When Sir Thomas Lawrence painted Lord Castlereagh some time ago, he did not try to exhibit his character, out of complaisance to his Lordship, nor his understanding, out of regard to himself; but he painted him in a fashionable coat, with his hair dressed in the fashion, in a genteel posture like one of his footmen, and with the prim, smirking aspect of a haberdasher. There was nothing of the noble *disinvoltura* of his Lordship's manner, the grand *contour* of his features, the profundity of design hid under an appearance of indifference, the traces of the Irish patriot or the English statesman. It would have puzzled Lavater or Spurzheim to have discovered there the author of the Letter to *Mon Prince*. Tacitus had drawn him before in a different style, and perhaps Sir Thomas despaired of rivalling this great master in his own way. Yet the picture pleased, and Mr. Perry of the *Chronicle* swore to the likeness, though he had been warned to the contrary. Now, if this picture had erred on the side of the characteristic expression as much as it did on that of mannered insignificance, how it must have shocked all parties in the State! An insipid misrepresentation was safer than a disagreeable reality. In the glosses of modern art, as in the modern refinement of law, it is the truth that makes the libel.—Again, the *picturesque* is necessarily banished from the painting rooms of the Academicians, and from the Great Room of the Academy. People of fashion go to be painted because other people do, and they wish to look like other people. We never remember to have seen a memorable head in the Exhibition of the Royal Academy. Any thing that had any thing singular or striking in it would look quite monstrous there, and would be stared out of countenance. Any thing extraordinary or original in nature is inadmissible in modern art; any thing that would strike the eye, or that you would ever think of again, would be a violation of decorum, an infringement of professional etiquette, and would disturb the uniform and well-arranged monotony of the walls of the Exhibition 'with most admired disorder.' A man of any originality of mind, if he has also the least common sense, soon finds his error, and reforms. At Rome one must do as the people at Rome do. The

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Academy is not the place for the eccentricities of genius. The persons of rank and opulence, who wish to have their pictures exhibited, do not wish to be exhibited as objects of natural history, as extraordinary phenomena in art or nature, in the moral or intellectual world; and in this they are right. Neither do they wish to volunteer their own persons, which they hold in due reverence, though there is nothing at all in them, as subjects for the painter to exercise his skill upon, as studies of light and shade, as merely objects of sight, as something curious and worth seeing from the outward accidents of nature. They do not like to share their triumph with nature; to sink their persons in 'her glorious light.' They owe no allegiance to the elements. They wish to be painted as Mr. and Mrs. Such-a-one, not as studies of light and shade; they wish to be represented as complete abstractions of persons and property, to have one side of the face seen as much as the other; to have their coat, waistcoat and breeches, their muslin dresses, silks, sophas, and settees, their dogs and horses, their house furniture, painted, to have themselves and all that belongs to them, and nothing else painted. The picture is made for them, and not they for the picture. Hence there can be nothing but the vapid, trite, and mechanical, in professional Art. Professional Art is a contradiction in terms. Art is genius, and genius cannot belong to a profession. Our Painters' galleries are not studies, but lounging shew-rooms. Would a booby with a star wish to be painted (think you) with a view to its effect in the picture, or would he not have it seen at all events and as much as possible? The Catalogue Writer wishes the gentlemen-sitters of the Royal Academy to go and look at Rembrandt's portraits, and to ask themselves, their wives, and daughters, whether they would like to be painted in the same way? No, truly. This, we confess, is hard upon our Artists, to have to look upon splendour and on obscurity still more splendid, which they dare not even attempt to imitate; to see themselves condemned, by the refinements of taste and progress of civilisation, to smear rouge and white paste on the faces and necks of their portraits, for ever; and still 'to let *I dare not* wait upon *I would*, like the poor cat in the adage.' But why then complain of the injury they would sustain by the restoration of Art (if it were possible) into the original wardship of nature and genius, when 'service sweat for duty, not for meed.' Sir Joshua made a shift to combine some of Rembrandt's art with his portraits, only by getting the start of public affectation, and by having the lead in his profession, so that like the early painters he could assert the independence of his own taste and judgment. The modern makers of catalogues would have driven

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him and his *chiaro scuro* into the shade presently. The critic professes to admire Sir Joshua, though all his excellences are Gothic, palpably borrowed from the Old Masters. But he is wrong or inconsistent in everything.—The imitation of the details of nature is not compatible with the professional avarice of the painter, as the two former essentials of the art are inconsistent with the vanity and ignorance of his employers. ‘This, this is the unkindest blow of all.’ It is that in which the understanding of the multitude is most likely to conspire with the painter’s ‘own gained knowledge’ to make him dissatisfied with his disproportioned profits or under the loss of them. The Dutch masters are instructive enough in this way, and shew the value of detail by shewing the value of Art where there is nothing else but this. But this is not all. It might be pretended by our wholesale manufacturers of *chef-d’œuvres* in the Fine Arts, that so much nicety of execution is useless or improper in works of high gusto and grand effect. It happens unfortunately, however, that the works of the greatest gusto and most picturesque effect have this fidelity of imitation often in the highest degree (as in Raphael, Titian, and Rembrandt), generally in a very high degree (as in Rubens and Paul Veronese), so that the moderns gain nothing by this pretext. This is a serious loss of time or reputation to them. To paint a hand like Vandyke would cost them as much time as a dozen half-lengths; and they could not do it after all. To paint an eye like Titian would cost them their whole year’s labour, and they would lose their time and their labour into the bargain. Or to take Claude’s landscapes as an example in this respect, as they are in almost all others. If Turner, whom, with the Catalogue-writer, we allow, most heartily allow, to be the greatest landscape-painter of the age, were to finish his trees or his plants in the foreground, or his distances, or his middle distances, or his sky, or his water, or his buildings, or any thing in his pictures, in like manner, he could only paint and sell one landscape where he now paints and sells twenty. This is a clear loss to the artist of pounds, shillings, and pence, and ‘that’s a feeling disputation.’ He would have to put twenty times as much of every thing into a picture as he now has, and that is what (if he is like other persons who have got into bad habits) he would be neither able nor willing to do. It was a common cant a short time ago to pretend of him as it formerly was of Wilson, that he had other things which Claude had not, and that what Claude had besides, only impaired the grandeur of his pictures. The public have seen to the contrary. They see the quackery of painting trees blue and yellow, to produce the effect of green at a distance. They see the affectation of despising the mechanism of the Art, and never thinking about any

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thing but the mechanism. They see that it is not true in Art, that a part is greater than the whole, or that the means are destructive of the end. They see that a daub, however masterly, cannot vie with the perfect landscapes of the all-accomplished Claude. 'To some men their graces serve them but as enemies'; and it was so till the other day with Claude. If it had been only for opening the eyes of the public on this subject, the Institution would have deserved well of the art and their country.

## FINE ARTS

*The Encyclopædia Britannica.*

1817.

OBJECTS OF THE ARTICLE.—In the *Encyclopædia* there is some account, under the head ARTS, of the general theory and history of the *Fine Arts*, including Poetry, Eloquence, Painting, Statuary, and Architecture. The term, in its widest application, would also embrace Music, Dancing, Theatrical Exhibition; and in general, all those arts, in which the powers of imitation or invention are exerted, chiefly with a view to the production of pleasure, by the immediate impression which they make on the mind. The phrase has of late, we think, been restricted to a narrower and more technical signification; namely, to Painting, Sculpture, Engraving, and Architecture, which appeal to the eye as the medium of pleasure; and by way of eminence, to the two first of these arts. In the present article, we shall adopt this limited sense of the term; and shall endeavour to develop the principles upon which the great Masters have proceeded, and also to inquire, in a more particular manner, into the state and probable advancement of these arts in this Country.

RULING PRINCIPLE OF THE FINE ARTS.—The great works of art, at present extant, and which may be regarded as models of perfection in their several kinds, are the Greek statues—the pictures of the celebrated Italian Masters—those of the Dutch and Flemish schools—to which we may add the comic productions of our own countryman, Hogarth. These all stand unrivalled in the history of art; and they owe their pre-eminence and perfection to one and the same principle,—*the immediate imitation of nature*. This principle predominated equally in the classical forms of the antique, and in the grotesque figures of Hogarth; the perfection of art in each arose from the truth and identity of the imitation with the reality; the difference was in the subjects; there was none in the mode of imitation. Yet the advocates for the *ideal system of art* would persuade their disciples, that the difference, between Hogarth

and the antique does not consist in the different forms of nature which they imitated, but in this, that the one is like, and the other unlike nature. This is an error, the most detrimental, perhaps, of all others, both to the theory and practice of art. As, however, the prejudice is very strong and general, and supported by the highest authority, it will be necessary to go somewhat elaborately into the question in order to produce an impression on the other side.

What has given rise to the common notion of the *ideal*, as something quite distinct from *actual* nature, is probably the perfection of the Greek statues. Not seeing among ourselves any thing to correspond in beauty and grandeur, either with the features or form of the limbs in these exquisite remains of antiquity, it was an obvious, but a superficial conclusion, that they must have been created from the idea existing in the artist's mind, and could not have been copied from anything existing in nature. The contrary, however, is the fact. The general form, both of the face and figure, which we observe in the old statues, is not an ideal abstraction, is not a fanciful invention of the sculptor, but is as completely local and national (though it happens to be more beautiful) as the figures on a Chinese screen, or a copperplate engraving of a negro chieftain in a book of travels. It will not be denied that there is a difference of physiognomy as well as of complexion in different races of men. The Greek form appears to have been naturally beautiful, and they had, besides, every advantage of climate, of dress, of exercise, and modes of life to improve it. The artist had also every facility afforded him in the study and knowledge of the human form, and their religious and public institutions gave him every encouragement in the prosecution of his art. All these causes contributed to the perfection of these noble productions; but we should be inclined principally to attribute the superior symmetry of form common to the Greek statues, in the first place, to the superior symmetry of the models in nature, and in the second, to the more constant opportunities for studying them. If we allow, also, for the superior genius of the people, we shall not be wrong; but this superiority consisted in their peculiar susceptibility to the impressions of what is beautiful and grand in nature. It may be thought an objection to what has just been said, that the antique figures of animals, &c. are as fine, and proceed on the same principles as their statues of gods or men. But all that follows from this seems to be, that their art had been perfected in the study of the human form, the test and proof of power and skill; and was then transferred easily to the general imitation of all other objects, according to their true characters, proportions, and appearances. As a confirmation of these remarks, the antique portraits of individuals were often superior

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even to the personifications of their gods. We think that no unprejudiced spectator of real taste can hesitate for a moment in preferring the head of the Antinous, for example, to that of the Apollo. And in general, it may be laid down as a rule, that the most perfect of the antiques are the most simple;—those which affect the least action, or violence of passion;—which repose the most on natural beauty of form, and a certain expression of sweetness and dignity, that is, which remain most nearly in that state in which they could be copied from nature without straining the limbs or features of the individual, or racking the invention of the artist. This tendency of Greek art to repose has indeed been reproached with insipidity by those who had not a true feeling of beauty and sentiment. We, however, prefer these models of habitual grace or internal grandeur to the violent distortions of suffering in the Laocoon, or even to the supercilious air of the Apollo. The Niobe, more than any other antique head, combines truth and beauty with deep passion. But here the passion is fixed, intense, habitual;—it is not a sudden or violent gesticulation, but a settled mould of features; the grief it expresses is such as might almost turn the human countenance itself into marble!

In general, then, we would be understood to maintain, that the beauty and grandeur so much admired in the Greek statues were not a voluntary fiction of the brain of the artist, but existed substantially in the forms from which they were copied, and by which the artist was surrounded. A striking authority in support of these observations, which has in some measure been lately discovered, is to be found in the *Elgin marbles*, taken from the Acropolis at Athens, and supposed to be the works of the celebrated Phidias. The process of fastidious refinement and indefinite abstraction is certainly not visible there. The figures have all the ease, the simplicity, and variety, of individual nature. Even the details of the subordinate parts, the loose hanging folds in the skin, the veins under the belly or on the sides of the horses, more or less swelled as the animal is more or less in action, are given with scrupulous exactness. This is true nature and true art. In a word, these invaluable remains of antiquity are precisely like casts taken from life. The *ideal* is not the preference of that which exists only in the mind, to that which exists in nature; but the preference of that which is fine in nature to that which is less so. There is nothing fine in art but what is taken almost immediately, and, as it were, in the mass, from what is finer in nature. Where there have been the finest models in nature, there have been the finest works of art.

As the Greek statues were copied from Greek forms, so Raphael's

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expressions were taken from Italian faces; and we have heard it remarked, that the women in the streets at Rome seem to have walked out of his pictures in the Vatican.

Sir Joshua Reynolds constantly refers to Raphael as the highest example in modern times (at least with one exception) of the grand or ideal style; and yet he makes the essence of that style to consist in the embodying of an abstract or general idea, formed in the mind of the artist by rejecting the peculiarities of individuals, and retaining only what is common to the species. Nothing can be more inconsistent than the style of Raphael with this definition. In his Cartoons and in his groupes in the Vatican, there is hardly a face or figure which is any thing more than fine individual nature finely disposed and copied. The late Mr. Barry, who could not be suspected of a prejudice on this side of the question, speaks thus of them: 'In Raphael's pictures (at the Vatican) of the *Dispute of the Sacrament*, and the *School of Athens*, one sees all the heads to be entirely copied from particular characters in nature, nearly proper for the persons and situations which he adapts them to; and he seems to me only to add and take away what may answer his purpose in little parts, features, &c.; conceiving, while he had the head before him, ideal characters and expressions, which he adapts these features and peculiarities of face to. This attention to the particulars which distinguish all the different faces, persons, and characters, the one from the other, gives his pictures quite the verity and unaffected dignity of nature, which stamp the distinguishing differences betwixt one man's face and body and another's.'

If any thing is wanting to the conclusiveness of this testimony, it is only to look at the pictures themselves; particularly the *Miracle of the Conversion*, and the *Assembly of Saints*, which are little else than a collection of divine portraits, in natural and expressive attitudes, full of the loftiest thought and feeling, and as varied as they are fine. It is this reliance on the power of nature which has produced those masterpieces by the prince of painters, in which expression is all in all;—where one spirit,—that of truth,—pervades every part, brings down Heaven to Earth, mingles Cardinals and Popes with Angels and Apostles,—and yet blends and harmonises the whole by the true touches and intense feeling of what is beautiful and grand in nature. It is no wonder that Sir Joshua, when he first saw Raphael's pictures in the Vatican, was at a loss to discover any great excellence in them, if he was looking out for this theory of the *ideal*,—of neutral character and middle forms.

There is more an appearance of abstract grandeur of form in Michael Angelo. He has followed up, has enforced, and expanded,

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as it were, a preconceived idea, till he sometimes seems to tread on the verge of caricature. His forms, however, are not *middle*, but *extreme* forms, massy, gigantic, supernatural. They convey the idea of the greatest size and strength in the figure, and in all the parts of the figure. Every muscle is swollen and turgid. This tendency to exaggeration would have been avoided, if Michael Angelo had recurred more constantly to nature, and had proceeded less on a scientific knowledge of the structure of the human body; for science gives only the positive form of the different parts, which the imagination may afterwards magnify, as it pleases, but it is nature alone which combines them with perfect truth and delicacy, in all the varieties of motion and expression. It is fortunate that we can refer, in illustration of our doctrine, to the admirable fragment of the Theseus at Lord Elgin's, which shows the possibility of uniting the grand and natural style in the highest degree. The form of the limbs, as affected by pressure or action, and the general sway of the body, are preserved with the most consummate mastery. We should prefer this statue as a model for forming the style of the student to the Apollo, which strikes us as having something of a theatrical appearance, or to the Hercules, in which there is an ostentatious and over-laboured display of anatomy. This last figure is so overloaded with sinews, that it has been suggested as a doubt, whether, if life could be put into it, it would be able to move. Grandeur of conception, truth of nature, and purity of taste, seem to have been at their height when the masterpieces which adorned the temple of Minerva at Athens, of which we have only these imperfect fragments, were produced. Compared with these, the later Greek statues display a more elaborate workmanship, more of the artifices of style. The several parts are more uniformly balanced, made more to tally like modern periods: each muscle is more equally brought out, and more highly finished as a part, but not with the same subordination of each part to the whole. If some of these wonderful productions have a fault, it is the want of that entire and naked simplicity which pervades the whole of the *Elgin marbles*.

WORKS OF THE GRECIAN AND ITALIAN ARTISTS.—Having spoken here of the Greek statues, and of the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo, as far as relates to the imitation of nature, we shall attempt to point out, to the best of our ability, and as concisely as possible, what we conceive to be their general and characteristic excellences. The ancients excelled in beauty of form; Michael Angelo in grandeur of conception; Raphael in expression. In Raphael's faces, particularly his women, the expression is very superior to the form; in the ancient statues the form is the principal

thing. The interest which the latter excite, is in a manner external; it depends on a certain grace and lightness of appearance, joined with exquisite symmetry and refined susceptibility to voluptuous emotions; but there is in general a want of pathos. In their looks, we do not read the workings of the heart; by their beauty they seem raised above the sufferings of humanity, by their beauty they are deified. The pathos which they exhibit is rather that of present and physical distress, than of deep internal sentiment. What has been remarked of Leonardo da Vinci, is also true of Raphael, that there is an angelic sweetness and tenderness in his faces, in which human frailty and passion are purified by the sanctity of religion. The ancient statues are finer objects for the eye to contemplate; they represent a more perfect race of physical beings, but we have little sympathy with them. In Raphael, all our natural sensibilities are heightened and refined by the sentiments of faith and hope, pointing mysteriously to the interests of another world. The same intensity of passion appears also to distinguish Raphael from Michael Angelo. Michael Angelo's forms are grander, but they are not so informed with expression. Raphael's, however ordinary in themselves, are full of expression, 'even to overflowing;' every nerve and muscle is impregnated with feeling,—bursting with meaning. In Michael Angelo, on the contrary, the powers of body and mind appear superior to any events that can happen to them; the capacity of thought and feeling is never full, never strained or tasked to the extremity of what it will bear. All is in a lofty repose and solitary grandeur, which no human interest can shake or disturb. It has been said that Michael Angelo painted *man*, and Raphael *men*; that the one was an epic, the other a dramatic painter. But the distinction we have stated is, perhaps, truer and more intelligible, *viz.* that the one gave greater dignity of form, and the other greater force and refinement of expression. Michael Angelo, in fact, borrowed his style from sculpture. He represented, in general, only single figures (with subordinate accompaniments), and had not to express the conflicting actions and passions of a multitude of persons. It is therefore a mere truism to say that his compositions are not dramatic. He is much more picturesque than Raphael. The whole figure of his *Jeremiah* droops and hangs down like a majestic tree surcharged with showers. His drawing of the human form has the characteristic freedom and boldness of Titian's landscapes.

After Michael Angelo and Raphael, there is no doubt that Leonardo da Vinci, and Correggio, are the two painters, in modern times, who have carried historical expression to the highest ideal perfection; and yet it is equally certain that their heads are carefully

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copied from faces and expressions in nature. Leonardo excelled principally in his women and children. We find, in his female heads, a peculiar charm of expression; a character of natural sweetness and tender playfulness, mixed up with the pride of conscious intellect, and the graceful reserve of personal dignity. He blends purity with voluptuousness; and the expression of his women is equally characteristic of 'the mistress or the saint.' His pictures are worked up to the height of the idea he had conceived, with an elaborate felicity; but this idea was evidently first suggested, and afterwards religiously compared with nature. This was his excellence. His fault is, that his style of execution is too mathematical; that is, his pencil does not follow the graceful variety of the details of objects, but substitutes certain refined gradations, both of form and colour, producing equal changes in equal distances, with a mechanical uniformity. Leonardo was a man of profound learning as well as genius, and perhaps transferred too much of the formality of science to his favourite art.

The masterpieces of Correggio have the same identity with nature, the same stamp of truth. He has indeed given to his pictures the utmost softness and refinement of outline and expression; but this idea, at which he constantly aimed, is filled up with all the details and varieties which such heads would have in nature. So far from any thing like a naked abstract idea, or middle form, the *individuality* of his faces has something peculiar in it, even approaching the grotesque. He has endeavoured to impress habitually on the countenance, those undulating outlines which rapture or tenderness leave there, and has chosen for this purpose those forms and proportions which most obviously assisted his design.

As to the colouring of Correggio, it is nature itself. Not only the general tone is perfectly true, but every speck and particle is varied in colour, in relief, in texture, with a care, a felicity, and an effect, which is almost magical. His light and shade are equally admirable. No one else, perhaps, ever gave the same harmony and roundness to his compositions. So true are his shadows,—equally free from coldness, opacity, or false glare;—so clear, so broken, so airy, and yet so deep, that if you hold your hand so as to cast a shadow on any part of the flesh which is in the light, this part, so shaded, will present exactly the same appearance which the painter has given to the shadowed part of the picture. Correggio, indeed, possessed a greater variety of excellences in the different departments of his art, than any other painter; and yet it is remarkable, that the impression which his pictures leave upon the mind of the common spectator is monotonous and comparatively feeble. His style is in some degree mannered and confined. For instance, he is without the force,

passion, and grandeur of Raphael, who, however, possessed his softness of expression, but of expression only; and in colour, in light and shade, and other qualities, was quite inferior to Correggio. We may, perhaps, solve this apparent contradiction by saying, that he applied the power of his mind to a greater variety of objects than others; but that this power was still of the same character; consisting in a certain exquisite sense of the harmonious, the soft and graceful in form, colour, and sentiment, but with a deficiency of strength, and a tendency to effeminacy in all these.

After the names of Raphael and Correggio, we shall mention that of Guido, whose female faces are exceedingly beautiful and ideal, but altogether commonplace and vapid, compared with those of Raphael or Correggio; and they are so, for no other reason but that the general idea they convey is not enriched and strengthened by an intense contemplation of nature. For the same reason, we can conceive nothing more unlike the antique than the figures of Nicholas Poussin, except as to the preservation of the costume; and it is perhaps chiefly owing to the habit of studying his art at second-hand, or by means of scientific rules, that the great merits of that able painter, whose understanding and genius are unquestionable, are confined to his choice of subjects for his pictures, and his manner of telling the story. His landscapes, which he probably took from nature, are superior as paintings to his historical pieces. The faces of Poussin want natural expression, as his figures want grace; but the backgrounds of his historical compositions can scarcely be surpassed. In his plague of Athens, the very buildings seem stiff with horror. His giants, seated on the top of their fabled mountains, and playing on their Pan's pipes, are as familiar and natural as if they were the ordinary inhabitants of the scene. The finest of his landscapes is his picture of the Deluge. The sun is just seen, wan and drooping in his course. The sky is bowed down with a weight of waters, and Heaven and earth seem mingling together.

Titian is at the head of the Venetian school. He is the first of all colourists. In delicacy and purity Correggio is equal to him, but his colouring has not the same warmth and gusto in it. Titian's flesh-colour partakes of the glowing nature of the climate, and of the luxuriousness of the manners of his country. He represents objects not through a merely lucid medium, but as if tinged with a golden light. Yet it is wonderful in how low a tone of local colouring his pictures are painted,—how rigidly his means are husbanded. His most gorgeous effects are produced, not less by keeping down, than by heightening his colours; the fineness of his gradations adds to their variety and force; and, with him, truth is the same thing as splendour.

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Every thing is done by the severity of his eye, by the patience of his touch. He is enabled to keep pace with nature, by never hurrying on before her; and as he forms the broadest masses out of innumerable varying parts and minute strokes of the pencil, so he unites and harmonises the strongest contrasts by the most imperceptible transitions. Every distinction is relieved and broken by some other intermediate distinction, like half notes in music; and yet all this accumulation of endless variety is so managed, as only to produce the majestic simplicity of nature; so that to a common eye there is nothing extraordinary in his pictures, any more than in nature itself. It is, we believe, owing to what has been here stated, that Titian is, of all painters, at once the easiest and the most difficult to copy. He is the most difficult to copy perfectly, for the artifice of his colouring and execution is hid in its apparent simplicity; and yet the knowledge of nature, and the arrangement of the forms and masses in his pictures, is so masterly, that any copy made from them, even the rudest outline or sketch, can hardly fail to have a look of high art. Because he was the greatest colourist in the world, this, which was his most prominent, has, for shortness, been considered as his only excellence; and he has been said to have been ignorant of drawing. What he was, generally speaking, deficient in, was invention or composition, though even this appears to have been more from habit than want of power; but his drawing of actual forms, where they were not to be put into momentary action, or adapted to a particular expression, was as fine as possible. His drawing of the forms of inanimate objects is unrivalled. His trees have a marked character and physiognomy of their own, and exhibit an appearance of strength or flexibility, solidity or lightness, as if they were endued with conscious power and purpose. Character was another excellence which Titian possessed in the highest degree. It is scarcely speaking too highly of his portraits to say, that they have as much expression, that is, convey as fine an idea of intellect and feeling, as the historical heads of Raphael. The chief difference appears to be, that the expression in Raphael is more imaginary and contemplative, and in Titian more personal and constitutional. The heads of the one seem thinking more of some event or subject, those of the other to be thinking more of themselves. In the portraits of Titian, as might be expected, the Italian character always predominates; there is a look of piercing sagacity, of commanding intellect, of acute sensibility, which it would be in vain to seek for in any other portraits. The daring spirit and irritable passions of the age and country, are distinctly stamped upon their countenances, and can be as little mistaken as the costume which they wear. The portraits of Raphael, though full of profound thought

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and feeling, have more of common humanity about them. Titian's portraits are the most historical that ever were painted; and they are so, for this reason, that they have most consistency of form and expression. His portraits of Hippolito de Medici, and of a young Neapolitan nobleman, lately in the gallery of the Louvre, are a striking contrast in this respect. All the lines of the face in the one, the eye-brows, the nose, the corners of the mouth, the contour of the face, present the same sharp angles, the same acute, edgy, contracted, violent expression. The other portrait has the finest expansion of feature and outline, and conveys the most exquisite idea possible, of mild, thoughtful sentiment. The consistency of the expression constitutes as great a charm in Titian's portraits, as the harmony of the colouring. The similarity sometimes objected to his heads, is partly national, and partly arises from the class of persons whom he painted. He painted only Italians; and in his time it rarely happened, that any but persons of the highest rank, Senators or Cardinals, sat for their pictures. The similarity of costume of the dress, the beard, &c. also adds to the similarity of their appearance. It adds, at the same time, to their picturesque effect; and the alteration in this respect, is one circumstance among others that has been injurious, not to say fatal, to modern art. This observation is not confined to portrait; for the hired dresses with which our historical painters clothe their figures sit no more easily on the imagination of the artist, than they do gracefully on the lay-figures over which they are thrown.

Giorgioni, Paul Veronese, Tintoret, and the Bassans, are the remaining great names of the Venetian school. The excellence of all of them consisted in the bold, masterly, and striking imitation of nature. Their want of *ideal form* and elevated character is, indeed, a constant subject of reproach against them. Giorgioni takes the first place among them; for he was in some measure the master of Titian, whereas the others were only his disciples. The Carraccis, Domenichino, and the rest of the Bolognese school, formed themselves on a principle of combining the excellences of the Roman and Venetian painters, in which they for a while succeeded to a considerable degree; but they degenerated and dwindled away into absolute insignificance, in proportion as they departed from nature, or the great masters who had copied her, to mould their works on academic rules, and the phantoms of abstract perfection.

**FLEMISH AND DUTCH PAINTERS.**—Rubens is the prince of the Flemish painters. Of all the great painters, he is perhaps the most artificial,—the one who painted most from his own imagination,—and, what was almost the inevitable consequence, the most

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of a mannerist. He had neither the Greek forms to study from, nor the Roman expression, nor the high character, picturesque costume, and sun-burnt hues which the Venetian painters had immediately before them. He took, however, what circumstances presented to him,—a fresher and more blooming tone of complexion, arising from moister air, and a colder climate. To this he added the congenial splendour of reflected lights and shadows cast from rich drapery; and he made what amends he could for the want of expression, by the richness of his compositions, and the fantastic variety of his allegorical groups. Both his colouring and his drawing were, however, ideal exaggerations. But both had particular qualities of the highest value. He has given to his flesh greater transparency and freshness than any other painter; and this excellence he had from nature. One of the finest instances will be found in his *Peasant Family going to Market*, in which the figures have all the bloom of health upon their countenances; and the very air of the surrounding landscape strikes sharp and wholesome on the sense. Rubens had another excellence; he has given all that relates to the expression of motion in his allegorical figures, in his children, his animals, even in his trees, to a degree which no one else has equalled, or indeed approached. His drawing is often deficient in proportion, in knowledge, and in elegance, but it is always picturesque. The drawing of N. Poussin, on the contrary, which has been much cried up, is merely learned and anatomical; he has a knowledge of the structure and measurements of the human body, but very little feeling of the grand, or beautiful, or striking, in form. All Rubens's forms have ease, freedom, and excessive elasticity. In the grotesque style of history,—as in the groups of satyrs, nymphs, bacchanals, and animals, where striking contrasts of form are combined with every kind of rapid and irregular movement,—he has not a rival. Witness his Silenus at Blenheim, where the lines seem drunk and staggering; and his procession of Cupids riding on animals at Whitehall, with that adventurous leader of the infantine crew, who, with a spear, is urging a lion, on which he is mounted, over the edge of the world; for beyond we only see a precipice of clouds and sky. Rubens's power of expressing motion perhaps arose from the facility of his pencil, and his habitually trusting a good deal to memory and imagination in his compositions; for this quality can be given in no other way. His portraits are the least valuable productions of his pencil. His landscapes are often delightful, and appear like the work of fairy hands.

It remains to speak of Vandyke and Rembrandt, the one the disciple of Rubens, the other the entire founder of his own school.

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It is not possible for two painters to be more opposite. The characteristic merits of the former are very happily summed up in a single line of a poetical critic, where he speaks of

‘The soft precision of the clear Vandyke.’

The general object of this analysis of the works of the great masters, has been to shew, that their pre-eminence has constantly depended, not on the creation of a fantastic, abstract excellence, existing nowhere but in their own minds, but in their selecting and embodying some one view of nature, which came immediately under their habitual observation, and which their particular genius led them to study and imitate with success. This is certainly the case with Vandyke. His portraits, mostly of English women, in the collection in the Louvre, have a cool refreshing air about them, a look of simplicity and modesty even in the very tone, which forms a fine contrast to the voluptuous glow and mellow golden lustre of Titian’s Italian women. There is a quality of flesh-colour in Vandyke which is to be found in no other painter, and which exactly conveys the idea of the soft, smooth, sliding, continuous, delicately varied surface of the skin. The objects in his pictures have the least possible difference of light and shade, and are presented to the eye without passing through any indirect medium. It is this extreme purity and silvery clearness of tone, together with the facility and precision of his particular forms, and a certain air of fashionable elegance, characteristic of the age in which he flourished, that places Vandyke in the first rank of portrait painters.

If ever there was a man of genius in the art, it was Rembrandt. He might be said to have created a medium of his own, through which he saw all objects. He was the grossest and the least vulgar, that is to say, the least common-place in his grossness, of all men. He was the most downright, the least fastidious of the imitators of nature. He took any object, he cared not what, how mean soever in form, colour, and expression, and from the light and shade which he threw upon it, it came out gorgeous from his hands. As Vandyke made use of the smallest contrasts of light and shade, and painted as if in the open air, Rembrandt used the most violent and abrupt contrasts in this respect, and painted his objects as if in a dungeon. His pictures may be said to be ‘bright with excessive darkness.’ His vision had acquired a lynx-eyed sharpness from the artificial obscurity to which he had accustomed himself. ‘Mystery and silence hung upon his pencil.’ Yet he could pass rapidly from one extreme to another, and dip his colours with equal success in the gloom of night, or in the blaze of the noon-day sun. In surrounding

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different objects with a medium of imagination, solemn or dazzling, he was a true poet; in all the rest, he was a mere painter, but a painter of no common stamp. The powers of his hand were equal to those of his eye; and indeed he could not have attempted the subjects he did, without an execution as masterly as his knowledge was profound. His colours are sometimes dropped in lumps on the canvas; at other times they are laid on as smooth as glass; and he not unfrequently painted with the handle of his brush. He had an eye for all objects as far as he had seen them. His history and landscapes are equally fine in their way. His landscapes we could look at for ever, though there is nothing in them. But 'they are of the earth, earthy.' It seems as if he had dug them out of nature. Every thing is so true, so real, so full of all the feelings and associations which the eye can suggest to the other senses, that we immediately take as strong an affection to them as if they were our home—the very place where we were brought up. No length of time could add to the intensity of the impression they convey. Rembrandt is the least classical and the most romantic of all painters. His Jacob's Ladder is more like a dream than any other picture that ever was painted. The figure of Jacob himself is thrown in one corner of the picture like a bundle of clothes, while the angels hover above the darkness, in the shape of airy wings.

It would be needless to prove that the generality of the Dutch painters copied from actual objects. They have become almost a bye-word for carrying this principle into its abuse, by copying every thing they saw, and having no choice or preference of one thing to another, unless that they preferred that which was most obvious and common. We forgive them. They perhaps did better in faithfully and skilfully imitating what they had seen, than in imagining what they had not seen. Their pictures at least show, that there is nothing in nature, however mean or trivial, that has not its beauty and some interest belonging to it, if truly represented. We prefer Vangoyen's views on the borders of a canal, the yellow-tufted bank, and passing sail, or Ruysdael's woods and sparkling waterfalls, to the most classical or epic compositions which they could have invented out of nothing; and we think that Teniers' boors, old women, and children, are very superior to the little carved ivory Venuses in the pictures of Vanderneer; just as we think Hogarth's *Marriage à la Mode* is better than his *Sigismunda*, or as Mr. Wilkie's *Card-Players* is better than his *Alfred*. We should not assuredly prefer a *Dutch Fair* by Teniers to a *Cartoon* by Raphael; but we suspect we should prefer a *Dutch Fair* by Teniers to a *Cartoon* by the same master; or we should prefer truth and nature in the simplest dress, to affectation

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and inanity in the most pompous disguise. Whatever is genuine in art must proceed from the impulse of nature and individual genius.

**FRENCH AND SPANISH PAINTERS.**—In the French school there are but two names of high and established reputation, N. Poussin and Claude Lorraine. Of the former we have already spoken; of the latter we shall give our opinion when we come to speak of our own Wilson. We ought not to pass over the names of Murillo and Velasquez, those admirable Spanish painters. It is difficult to characterise their peculiar excellences as distinct from those of the Italian and Dutch schools. They may be said to hold a middle rank between the painters of mind and body. They express not so much thought and sentiment, nor yet the mere exterior, as the life and spirit of the man. Murillo is probably at the head of that class of painters who have treated subjects of common life. After making the colours on the canvass feel and think, the next best thing is to make them breathe and live. But there is in Murillo's pictures of this kind a look of real life, a cordial flow of native animal spirits, which we find nowhere else. We might here refer particularly to his picture of the *Two Spanish Beggar Boys*, in the collection at Dulwich College, which cannot easily be forgotten by those who have ever seen it.

### JAMES BARRY

*The Encyclopædia Britannica.*

1817.

**BARRY** (James) an eminent painter, was born in Cork, in Ireland, October 11, 1741. His father had been a builder, and at one time of his life, a coasting trader between the two countries of England and Ireland. To this business of a trader was James destined, and he actually made, when a boy, several voyages; but these voyages being forced upon him, he on one occasion ran away from the ship, and on others discovered such an aversion to the life and habits of a sailor, as to induce his father to quit all hopes of him in this line, and to suffer him to pursue his inclinations, which led him to drawing and study. When on board his father's vessel, instead of handling sails and ropes, and climbing the mast, he was generally occupied with a piece of black chalk, sketching the coast, or drawing figures, as his fancy directed him. When his father found that the idea of making a sailor of him must be given up, he permitted him to acquire as much instruction as the schools of Cork afforded; but long retained his aversion to the chalk drawings, with which the floors and walls of the house were covered; the boy being always engaged in some attempt at large figures, and early catching at the means of representing action, attitude, and passion. It was at a very early period of

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his life that some bookseller in Ireland, undertaking to reprint a set of fables or emblems, young Barry offered to furnish the drawings, and, as it is believed, helped to etch the engravings, such as they were. At the schools in Cork, which he was sent to, he was distinguished by his parts and industry above his school-fellows; his habits differed from those of ordinary boys, as he seldom mixed in their games or amusements, but at those times stole off to his own room, where he worked at his pencil, or was studying some book that he had borrowed or bought. He would spend whole nights in this manner at his studies, to the alarm of his mother, who dreaded his injuring his health or setting fire to the house, and who often kept up his sister or the servant to watch him. His allowance of money he spent in buying books or candles to read by; he sometimes locked himself up in his room for days, and seldom slept upon his bed, or else made it so hard as to take away the temptation or luxury of lying long in it. Perhaps the unsocial and ascetic turn of his temper, which thus early manifested itself, might be remarked as the source both of the misfortunes of his life, and the defects of his genius. Common humanity, a sense of pleasure, and a sympathy with the feelings of those around us, is not more necessary to success in life, than it probably is to success in the fine arts. Few things can be more fatal to the artist than this sort of indifference to the common pleasures and pursuits of life. If affected, it is bad; if real and constitutional, it is even worse. It stuck to poor Barry to the last. It is not to be understood that, at this period of his life, he led the life of an absolute recluse, for he could and did occasionally join in any feats going on in the neighbourhood, and was not behind other boys in such pastimes and mischief as boys are usually fond of. An adventure which happened to him about this time, and which left a strong impression on his mind, is worth mentioning here. In one of his rambles in the neighbourhood, he entered, one winter's evening, an old, and, as he thought, an uninhabited house, situate in a narrow bye-lane in the city of Cork. The house was without doors or windows; but curiosity impelled him to enter, and, after mounting a rotten staircase, which conducted to empty rooms on different floors, he arrived at the garret, where he could just discern, by the glimmering light of a few embers, two old and emaciated figures, broken by age, disease, and want, sitting beside each other, in the act, as far as their palsied efforts would permit, of tearing each other's faces; not a word being uttered by either, but with the most horrible grimaces that malice could invent. They took no notice of his entrance, but went on with their deeds of mutual hate, which made such an impression on the boy that he ran down stairs, making his own

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reflections, which he afterwards found verified through life, that man and all animals are malicious and cruel in proportion as they are impotent; and that age and poverty, two of the worst evils in human life, almost always add to the calamities inherent in them by arts of their own creating. In general, his great desire to improve his mind led him to seek the society of educated men; who were not averse to receive him, seeing his active and inquisitive disposition, and his seriousness of manner, couched under a garb the plainest and coarsest; for he adopted this kind of attire from his childhood, not from affectation, but from an indifference to all dress. Having a retentive memory, he profited by his own reading, and by the conversation of others, who directed him also in the choice of books. As his finances were too low to make many purchases, he borrowed books from his friends, and was in the practice of making large extracts from such as he particularly liked, and sometimes even of copying out the whole book, of which several specimens were found among his papers, written in a stiff school-boy's hand. As his industry was excessive, his advances in the acquisition of knowledge were rapid, and he was regarded as a prodigy by his school-fellows. His mother being a zealous Catholic, the son could not avoid mixing at times in the company of priests resident at Cork, who pointed out to him books of polemical divinity, of which he became a great reader, and for which he retained a strong bias during his lifetime. He was said at one time to have been destined for the priesthood, but for this report there is no authority. He, however, always continued a Catholic, and in the decline of life manifested rather a bigoted attachment to the religion of his early choice. For a short interval he had a little wavering in his belief of revealed religion in general; but a conversation with Mr. Edmund Burke put an end to this levity. A book which Mr. Burke lent him, and which settled his mind on this subject, was Bishop Butler's *Analogy*; and, as a suitable reward, he has placed this Prelate in the group of divines, in his picture of *Elysium*.

About the age of seventeen he first attempted oil paintings; and between that and the age of twenty-two, when he first went to Dublin, he produced several large ones, which decorated his father's house, and represented subjects not often handled by young men; such as *Æneas* escaping with his family from the flames of Troy; *Susanna* and the Elders; *Daniel* in the Lion's Den, &c. At this period, he also produced the picture which first drew him into public notice, launched him on an ampler theatre than his native town of Cork afforded, and, above all, gained him the acquaintance and patronage of Mr. Burke. This picture was founded on an old tradition of the

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landing of St. Patrick on the sea-coast of Cashel, and of the conversion and baptism of the king of that district by the patron saint of Ireland. The priest, in the act of baptising his new convert, inadvertently strikes the spear of the crosier in the foot of the monarch. The holy father, absorbed in the duties of his office, does not perceive what he has done, and the king, without interrupting the ceremony, bears the pain with immoveable fortitude. This incident, together with the gestures and expressions of the attendants, certainly formed a good subject for an historical picture; and Mr. Barry's manner of treating it was such as to insure him the applause and admiration of the connoisseurs of the metropolis of the sister kingdom, where it was exhibited in 1762 or 1763. Mr. Barry took this picture with him to Dublin; and afterwards going to the exhibition room, being delighted with the encomiums it received from the spectators, he could not refrain from making himself known as the painter. His pretensions were treated with great contempt by the company, and Barry burst into tears of anger and vexation. But the incredulity of his hearers was a compliment paid to the real or supposed excellence of his painting. It appears that a Dr. Sleigh, a physician of Cork, and a sensible and amiable man, was first instrumental in introducing young Barry to the notice of Mr. Burke. During their early acquaintance, having fallen into a dispute on the subject of taste, Barry quoted a passage in support of his opinion from the *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, which had been just then published anonymously, and which Barry, in his youthful admiration of it, had, it seems, transcribed entire. Burke affected to treat this work as a theoretical romance, of no authority whatever, which threw Barry into such a rage in its defence, that Mr. Burke thought it necessary to appease him by owning himself to be the author. The scene ended in Barry's running to embrace him, and showing him the copy of the work which he had been at the pains to transcribe. He passed his time in Dublin in reading, drawing, and society. While he resided here, an anecdote is preserved of him, which marks the character of the man. He had been enticed by his companions several times to carousings at a tavern, and one night, as he wandered home by himself, a thought struck him of the frivolity and viciousness of thus mis-spending his time: the fault, he imagined, lay in his money, and, therefore, without more ado, in order to avoid the morrow's temptation, he threw the whole of his wealth, which perhaps amounted to no great sum, into the Liffey, and locked himself up at his favourite pursuits. After a residence of seven or eight months in Dublin, an opportunity offered of accompanying some part of Mr. Burke's family to London, which he eagerly embraced. This took place some time

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in the year 1764, when he was twenty-three years of age, and with one of those advantages which do not always fall to the lot of young artists on their arrival in the British capital, that of being recommended to the acquaintance of the most eminent men in the profession by the persuasive eloquence of a man who, to genius in himself, added the rare and noble quality of encouraging it in others; this was Mr. Burke, who lost no time, not merely in making Barry known, but in procuring for him the first of all objects to an inexperienced and destitute young artist, employment. This employment was chiefly that of copying in oil drawings by Mr. Stewart, better known by the name of Athenian Stewart; and whether it suited the ambition of Barry or not, to be at this kind of labour, yet there can be no doubt that he profited by his connection with such a man as Stewart, and had full leisure to cast his eye about, and to improve by the general aspect of art and artists that occupied the period.

Mr. Burke and his other friends thinking it important that he should be introduced to a wider and nobler school of art than this country afforded, now came forward with the means necessary to accomplish this object; and in the latter end of 1765 Mr. Barry proceeded to the Continent, where he remained till the beginning of 1771, studying his art with an enthusiasm which seemed to augur the highest success, and making observations on the different *chef d'œuvres* of Italy with equal independence of judgment and nicety of discrimination. He was supported during this period by the friendly liberality of the Burke family (Edmund, William, and Richard), who allowed him forty pounds a-year for his necessary expenditure, besides occasional remittances for particular purposes. He proceeded first to Paris, then to Rome, where he remained upwards of three years, from thence to Florence and Bologna, and home through Venice. His letters to the Burkes, giving an account of Michael Angelo, Raphael, Titian, and Leonardo da Vinci, show a complete insight into the characteristic merits of their works, and would make us wonder (if the case were at all singular) how he could enter with such force, delicacy, and feeling, into excellences of which he never transplanted an atom into his own works. He saw, felt, and *wrote*; his impressions were profound and refined, but the expression of them must be instantaneous, such as gave the results of them with a stroke of the pen, as they were received by a glance of the eye, and he could not wait for the slow process of the pencil for embodying his conceptions in the necessary details of his own art. It was his desire to make the ideas and language of painting co-instantaneous,—to express abstract results by abstract mechanical means (a thing impossible),—to stamp the idea in his mind at once upon the canvass,

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without knowledge of its parts, without labour, without patience, without a moment's time or thought intervening between what he wished to do and its being done, that was perhaps the principal obstacle to his ever attaining a degree of excellence in his profession at all proportioned either to his ambition or his genius. It is probable, that, as his hand had not the patience to give the details of objects, his eye, from the same habit of mind, had not the power to analyse them. It is possible, however, to see the results without the same laborious process that is necessary to convey them; for the eye sees faster than the hand can move.

We suspect Mr. Barry did not succeed very well in copying the pictures he so well describes; because he appears to have copied but few, only one of Raphael, as far as we can find, and three from Titian, whom he justly considered as the model of colouring, and as more perfect in that department of the art than either Raphael or Michael Angelo were in theirs, expression and form, the highest excellence in which he conceives to have been possessed only by the ancients. In copying from the antique, however, he manifested the same aversion to labour, or to that kind of labour which, by showing us our defects, compels us to make exertions to remedy them. He made all his drawings from the antique, by means of a *delineator*, that is, a mechanical instrument, to save the trouble of acquiring a knowledge both of form and proportion. In this manner, equally gratifying to his indolence and his self-love, he is stated to have made numberless sketches of the antique statues, of all sizes, and in all directions, carefully noting down on his sketch-paper their several measurements and proportions.

The consequences are before us in his pictures; namely, that all those of his figures which he took from these memorandums are deficient in every thing but form, and that all the others are equally deficient in form and every thing else. If he did not employ his pencil properly, or enough, in copying from the models he saw, he employed his thoughts and his pen about them with indefatigable zeal and spirit. He talked well about them; he wrote well about them; he made researches into all the collateral branches of art and knowledge, sculpture, architecture, cameos, seals, and intaglios. There is a long letter of his, addressed to Mr. Burke, on the origin of the Gothic style of architecture, written, as it should seem, to convince his friend and patron of his industry in neglecting his proper business. Soon after his arrival at Rome, he became embroiled with the whole tribe of connoisseurs, painters, and patrons there, whether native or foreign, on subjects of *virtù*; and he continued in this state of hostility with those around him while he staid there, and, indeed, to the end

of his life. One might be tempted to suppose that Barry chiefly studied his art as a subject to employ his dialectics upon. On this unfortunate disposition of his to wrangling and controversy, as it was likely to affect his progress in his art and his progress in life, he received some most judicious advice from Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. Burke, his answers to which show an admirable self-ignorance. On his irritable denunciations of the practices and tricks of the Italian picture-dealers, Mr. Burke makes a reflection well deserving of attention. 'In particular, you may be assured that the traffic in antiquity, and all the enthusiasm, folly, and fraud, which may be in it, *never did, nor never can, hurt the merit of living artists.* Quite the contrary, in my opinion: for I have ever observed, that, whatever it be that turns the minds of men to anything relative to the arts, even the most remotely so, brings artists more and more into credit and repute; and though, now and then, the mere broker and dealer in such things runs away with a great deal of profit, yet, in the end, ingenious men will find themselves gainers by the dispositions which are nourished and diffused in the world by such pursuits.' Mr. Barry painted two pictures while abroad, his Adam and Eve and his Philoctetes. The first of these he sent home as a specimen of his progress in the art. It does not appear to have given much satisfaction. His Philoctetes he brought home with him. It is a most wretched, coarse, unclassical performance, the direct opposite of all that he thought it to be. During his stay at Rome, he made an excursion to Naples, and was highly delighted with the collections of art there. All the time he was abroad, Mr. Burke and his brothers not only were punctual in their remittances to him, but kept up a most friendly and cordial correspondence. On one occasion, owing to the delay of a letter, a bill which Barry had presented to a banker was dishonoured. This detained Barry for some time at the place where he was in very awkward circumstances, and he had thoughts of getting rid of his chagrin and of his prospects in life at once, by running away and turning friar. For some time previous to his return to England, Mr. Hamilton (afterwards Sir William) appears to have been almost the only person with whom he kept up any intimacy. It was on his return home through Milan that he witnessed, and has recorded with due reprobation, the destruction of Leonardo's Last Supper, which two bungling artists were employed to paint over by order of one Count de Firmian, the secretary of state.

In the spring of 1771, Mr. Barry arrived in England, after an absence of five years. He soon after produced his picture of Venus, which has been compared to the Galatea of Raphael, the Venus of Titian, and the Venus of Medicis, without reason. Mr. Barry

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flattered himself that he had surpassed the famous statue of that name, by avoiding the appearance of *maternity* in it. There is an engraving of it by Mr. Valentine Green. In 1773, he exhibited his Jupiter and Juno on Mount Ida, which was much praised by some critics of that day. His Death of General Wolfe was considered as a falling off from his great style of art, which consisted in painting Greek subjects, and it accordingly is said to 'have obtained no praise.' His fondness for Greek costume was assigned by his admirers as the cause of his reluctance to paint portraits; as if the coat was of more importance than the face. His fastidiousness, in this respect, and his frequent excuses, or blunt refusals, to go on with a portrait of Mr. Burke, which he had begun, caused a misunderstanding with that gentleman, which does not appear to have been ever entirely made up. The difference between them is said to have been widened by Burke's growing intimacy with Sir Joshua, and by Barry's feeling some little jealousy of the fame and fortune of his rival in *an humbler walk of the art*. He, about the same time, painted a pair of classical subjects, Mercury inventing the Lyre, and Narcissus looking at himself in the water, the last suggested to him by Mr. Burke. He also painted an historical picture of Chiron and Achilles, and another of the story of Stratonice, for which last the Duke of Richmond gave him a hundred guineas. In 1773, there was a plan in contemplation for our artists to decorate the inside of St. Paul's with historical and sacred subjects; but this plan fell to the ground, from its not meeting with the concurrence of the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury, to the no small mortification of Barry, who had fixed upon the subject he was to paint,—the rejection of Christ by the Jews when Pilate proposes his release. In 1775, he published *An Inquiry into the real and imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England*, vindicating the capacity of the English for the fine arts, and tracing their slow progress hitherto to the Reformation; to political and civil dissensions; and, lastly, to the general turn of the public mind to mechanics, manufactures, and commerce. In the year 1774, shortly after the failure of the scheme of decorating St. Paul's, a proposal was made, through Mr. Valentine Green, to the same artists, Reynolds, West, Cipriani, Barry, &c. for ornamenting the great room of the Society for the *Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce*, in the Adelphi, with historical and allegorical paintings. This proposal was at the time rejected by the artists themselves; but, in 1777, Mr. Barry made an offer to paint the whole himself, on condition of being allowed the choice of his subjects, and being paid the expense of canvass, paints, and models, by the Society. This offer was accepted, and he finished the series of pictures at the

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end of seven years, instead of two, which he had proposed to himself, but with entire satisfaction to the members of the Society, for whom it was intended, and who conducted themselves to him with liberality throughout. They granted him two exhibitions, and at different periods voted him 50 guineas, their gold medal, and again 200 guineas, and a seat among them. Dr. Johnson remarked, when he saw the pictures, that, 'whatever the hand had done, the head had done its part.' There was an excellent anonymous criticism, supposed to be by Mr. Burke, published on them, in answer to some remarks put forth by Barry, in his descriptive catalogue, on the *ideal* style of art, and the necessity of size to grandeur. His notions on both these subjects are very ably controverted, and, indeed, they are the rock on which Barry's genius split. It would be curious if Mr. Burke were the author of these strictures; for it is not improbable that Barry was led into the last error, here deprecated, by that author's *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*. The series consists of six pictures, showing the progress of human culture. The first represents Orpheus taming the savages by his lyre. The figure of Orpheus himself is more like a drunken bacchanal than an inspired poet or lawgiver. The only part of this picture which is valuable is the background, in one part of which a lion is seen ready to dart upon a family group milking near a cave, and, in another, a tyger is pursuing a horse. There is certainly a scope of thought and picturesque invention, in thus showing indirectly the protection which civilisation extends, as it were, over both man and animals. The second picture is a Grecian harvest, which has nothing Grecian in it. But we cannot apply this censure to the third picture of the Olympic Games, some of the figures in which, and the principal group, are exceedingly graceful, classical, and finely conceived. This picture is the only proof Mr. Barry has left upon canvass that he was not utterly insensible to the beauties of the art. The figure of the young man on horseback really reminds the spectator of some of the Elgin marbles; and the outlines of the two youthful victors at the games, supporting their father on their shoulders, are excellent. The colouring is, however, as bald and wretched in this picture as the rest, and there is a great want of expression. The fourth picture is the triumph of commerce, with Dr. Burney swimming in the Thames, with his hair powdered, among naked sea-nymphs. The fifth, the Society of Arts, distributing their annual prizes. And the sixth represents Elysium. This last picture is a collection of caricatured portraits of celebrated individuals of all ages and nations, strangely jumbled together, with a huge allegorical figure of Retribution driving Heresy, Vice, and Atheism, into the infernal regions. The moral design of all these pictures is

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much better explained in the catalogue than on the canvass; and the artist has added none of the graces of the pencil to it in any of them, with the exception above made. Mr. Barry appears, however, to have rested his pretensions to fame as an artist on this work, for he did little afterwards but paltry engravings from himself, and the enormous and totally worthless picture of Pandora in the assembly of the gods. His self-denial, frugality, and fortitude, in the prosecution of his work at the Adelphi, cannot be too much applauded. He has been heard to say, that at the time of his undertaking it, he had only 16s. in his pocket; and that he had often been obliged, after painting all day, to sit up at night to sketch or engrave some design for the printsellers, which was to supply him with his next day's subsistence. In this manner he did his prints of Job, dedicated to Mr. Burke, of the birth of Venus, Polemon, Head of Chatham, King Lear, from the picture painted for the Shakespear gallery, &c. His prints are caricatures even of his pictures: they seem engraved on rotten wood.

Soon after Mr. Barry's return from the Continent, he was chosen a member of the Royal Academy; and in 1782, was appointed professor of painting, in the room of Mr. Penny, with a salary of £30 a-year. The lectures which he delivered from the chair were full of strong sense, and strong advice, both to the students and academicians. Among other things, he insisted much on the necessity of purchasing a collection of pictures by the best masters as models for the students, and proposed several of those in the Orleans collection. This recommendation was not relished by the academicians, who, perhaps, thought their own pictures the best models for their several pupils. Bickerings, jealousies, and quarrels arose, and at length reached such a height, that, in 1799, Mr. Barry was expelled from the academy, soon after the appearance of his *Letter to the Dilettanti Society*; a very amusing, but eccentric publication, full of the highest enthusiasm for his art, and the lowest contempt for the living professors of it. In 1800, he undertook a design or drawing to celebrate the union of the two kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland. The profits of the two exhibitions of the Adelphi pictures are said to have amounted to above £500. Lord Romney presented him with 100 guineas for his portrait, which had been copied into one of the pictures, and he had twenty guineas for a head of Mr. Hooper. He probably received other sums for portraits introduced into the work. By extreme frugality he contrived, not only to live, but to save money. His house was twice robbed of sums which he kept by him; one of the times (in 1794) of upwards of £100; a loss which was made up by the munificence of Lord Radnor, and by that of his

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friends, the Hollis's. After the loss of his salary, a subscription was set on foot by the Earl of Buchan to relieve him from his difficulties, and to settle him in a larger house to finish his picture of Pandora. The subscription amounted to £1000, with which an annuity was bought; but of this he was prevented from enjoying the benefit; for, on the 6th of February 1806, he was seized with a pleuritic fever, and as he neglected medical assistance at first, it was afterwards of no use. After lingering on for a fortnight in considerable pain, but without losing his fortitude of mind, he died on the 22nd of the same month. On the 13th of March, the body was taken to the great room of the Society of Arts, and was thence attended, the following day, by a numerous and respectable train of his friends to the cathedral of St. Paul's, where it was deposited.

Mr. Barry, as an artist, a writer, and a man, was distinguished by great inequality of powers and extreme contradictions in character. He was gross and refined at the same time; violent and urbane; sociable and sullen; inflammable and inert; ardent and phlegmatic; relapsing from enthusiasm into indolence; irritable, headstrong, impatient of restraint; captious in his intercourse with his friends, wavering and desultory in his profession. In his personal habits he was careless of appearances or decency, penurious, slovenly, and squalid. He regarded nothing but his immediate impulses, confirmed into incorrigible habits. His pencil was under no control. His eye and his hand seemed to receive a first rude impulse, to which it gave itself up, and paid no regard to any thing else. The strength of the original impetus only drove him farther from his object. His genius constantly flew off in tangents, and came in contact with nature only at salient points. There are two drawings of his from statues of a lion and a lioness at Rome; the nose of the lioness is two straight lines; the ears of the lion two curves, which might be mistaken for horns; as if, after it had taken its first direction, he lost the use of his hand, and his tools worked mechanically and monotonously without his will. His enthusiasm and vigour were exhausted in the conception; the execution was crude and abortive. His writings are a greater acquisition to the art than his paintings. The powers of conversation were what he most excelled in; and the influence which he exercised in this way over all companies where he came, in spite of the coarseness of his dress, and the frequent rudeness of his manner, was great. Take him for all in all, he was a man of whose memory it is impossible to think without admiration as well as regret.

## DEATH ON THE PALE HORSE

### WEST'S PICTURE OF DEATH ON THE PALE HORSE

*The Edinburgh Magazine.*

December 1817.

MR. WEST'S name stands deservedly high in the annals of art in this country—too high for him to condescend to be his own puffer, even at second-hand. He comes forward, in the present instance, as the painter and the showman of the piece; as the candidate for public applause, and the judge who awards himself the prize; as the idol on the altar, and the priest who offers up the grateful incense of praise. He places himself, as it were, before his own performance, with a *Catalogue Raisonné* in his hand, and, before the spectator can form a judgment on the work itself, dazzles him with an account of the prodigies of art which are there conceived and executed. This is not quite fair. It is a proceeding which, though 'it sets on a quantity of barren spectators to *admire*, cannot but make the judicious grieve.' Mr. West, by thus taking to himself unlimited credit for the 'high endeavour and the glad success,' by proclaiming aloud that he has aimed at the highest sublimities of his art, and as loudly, with a singular mixture of pomposity and phlegm, that he has fully accomplished all that his most ardent hopes had anticipated, must, we should think, obtain a great deal of spurious, catchpenny reputation, and lose a great deal of that genuine tribute of approbation to which he is otherwise entitled, by turning the attention of the well-informed and unprejudiced part of the community from his real and undoubted merits to his groundless and exaggerated pretensions. *Self-praise*, it is said, *is no praise*; but it is worse than this. It either shows great weakness and vanity for an artist to talk (or to get another to talk) of his own work, which was produced yesterday, and may be forgotten to-morrow, with the same lofty, emphatic, solemn tone, as if it were already stamped with the voice of ages, and had become sacred to the imagination of the beholder; or else the doing so is a deliberate attempt to encroach on the right of private judgment and public opinion, which those who are not its dupes will resent accordingly, and endeavour to repel by acts of precaution or hostility. An unsuccessful effort to extort admiration is sure to involve its own punishment.

We should not have made these remarks, if the 'Description of the Picture of Death' had been a solitary instance of the kind; but it is one of a series of descriptions of the same sort—it is a part of a system of self-adulation which cannot be too much discouraged. Perhaps Mr. West may say, that the Descriptive Catalogue is not *his*; that he has nothing to do with its composition or absurdities. But it

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must be written with his consent and approbation; and this is a sanction which it ought not to receive. We presume the artist would have it in his option to put a negative on any undue censure or flagrant abuse of his picture; it must be equally in his power, and it is equally incumbent upon him, to reject, with dignified modesty, the gross and palpable flatteries which it contains, direct or by implication.

The first notice we received of this picture was by an advertisement in a morning paper, (the editor of which is not apt to hazard extravagant opinions without a prompter,) purporting that, 'in consequence of the President's having devoted a year and a half to its completion, and of its having for its subject the *Terrible Sublime*, it would place Great Britain in the same conspicuous relation to the rest of Europe in arts, that the battle of Waterloo had done in arms!' We shall not stay to decide between the battle and the picture; but the writer follows up the same idea of the *Terrible Sublime* in the Catalogue, the first paragraph of which is conceived in the following terms:—

'The general effect proposed to be excited by this picture is the terrible sublime, and its various modifications, until lost in the opposite extremes of pity and horror, a sentiment which painting has so seldom attempted to awaken, that a particular description of the subject will probably be acceptable to the public.'

'So shall my anticipation prevent your discovery.' Mr. West here, like Bayes in the 'Rehearsal,' *insinuates the plot* very profoundly. He has, it seems, opened a new walk in art with its alternate ramifications into the opposite regions of horror and pity, and kindly takes the reader by the hand, to show him how triumphantly he has arrived at the end of his journey.

'In poetry,' continues the writer, 'the same effect is produced by a few abrupt and rapid gleams of description, touching, as it were, with fire, the features and edges of a general mass of awful obscurity; but in painting, such indistinctness would be a defect, and imply, that the artist wanted the power to pourtray the conceptions of his fancy. Mr. West was of opinion that to delineate a physical form, which in its moral impression would approximate to that of the visionary Death of Milton, it was necessary to endow it, if possible, with the appearance of superhuman strength and energy. He has, therefore, exerted the utmost force and perspicuity of his pencil on the central figure.' This is 'spoken with authority, and not as the scribes.' Poetry, according to the definition here introduced of it, resembles a candle-light picture, which gives merely the rim and outlines of things in a vivid and dazzling, but confused and imperfect manner. We cannot tell whether this account will be considered as satisfactory. But

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Mr. West, or his commentator, should tread cautiously on this ground. He may otherwise commit himself, not only in a comparison with the epic poet, but with the inspired writer, who only uses *words*. It will hardly be contended, for instance, that the account of Death on the Pale Horse in the book of Revelations, never produced its due effect of *the terrible sublime*, till the deficiencies of the pen were supplied by the pencil. Neither do we see how the endowing a physical form with superhuman strength, has any necessary connection with the *moral impression of the visionary Death of Milton*. There seems to be here some radical mistake in Mr. West's theory. The moral attributes of death are powers and effects of an infinitely wide and general description, which no individual or physical form can possibly represent, but by courtesy of speech or by a distant analogy. The moral impression of Death is essentially visionary; its reality is in the mind's eye. Words are here the only things; and things, physical forms, the mere mockeries of the understanding. The less definite the conception, the less bodily, the more vast, unformed, and unsubstantial, the nearer does it approach to some resemblance of that omnipresent, lasting, universal, irresistible principle, which everywhere, and at some time or other, exerts its power over all things. Death is a mighty abstraction, like Night, or Space, or Time. He is an ugly customer, who will not be invited to supper, or to sit for his picture. He is with us and about us, but we do not see him. He stalks on before us, and we do not mind him; he follows us behind, and we do not look back at him. We do not see him making faces at us in our lifetime! we do not feel him tickling our bare ribs afterwards, nor look at him through the empty grating of our hollow eyes! Does Mr. West really suppose that he has put the very image of Death upon his canvas; that he has taken the fear of him out of our hearts; that he has circumscribed his power with a pair of compasses; that he has measured the length of his arm with a two-foot rule; that he has suspended the stroke of his dart with a stroke of his pencil; that he has laid his hands on the universal principle of destruction, and hemmed him in with lines and lineaments, and made a gazing-stock and a show of him, 'under the patronage of the Prince Regent' (as that illustrious person has taken, and confined, and made a show of another *enemy of the human race*)—so that the work of decay and dissolution is no longer going on in nature; that all we have heard or felt of death is but a fable compared with this distinct, living, and warranted likeness of him? Oh no! There is no power in the pencil actually to embody an abstraction, to impound the imagination, to circumvent the powers of the soul, which hold communion with the universe. The painter cannot make the general particular,

## WEST'S PICTURE OF DEATH

the infinite and imaginary defined and palpable, that which is only believed and dreaded, an object of sight.

As Mr. West appears to have wrong notions of the powers of his art, so he seems not to put in practice all that it is capable of. The only way in which the painter of genius can represent the force of moral truth, is by translating it into an artificial language of his own,—by substituting hieroglyphics for words, and presenting the closest and most striking affinities his fancy and observation can suggest between the general idea and the visible illustration of it. Here we think Mr. West has failed. The artist has represented Death riding over his prostrate victims in all the rage of impotent despair. He is in a great splutter, and seems making a last effort to frighten his foes by an explosion of red-hot thunderbolts, and a pompous display of his allegorical paraphernalia. He has not the calm, still, majestic form of Death, killing by a look,—withering by a touch. His presence does not make the still air cold. His flesh is not stony or cadaverous, but is crusted over with a yellow glutinous paste, as if it had been baked in a pye. Milton makes Death ‘grin horrible a ghastly smile,’ with an evident allusion to the common Death’s head; but in the picture he seems grinning for a wager, with a full row of loose rotten teeth; and his terrible form is covered with a long black drapery, which would cut a figure in an undertaker’s shop, and which cuts a figure where it is (for it is finely painted), but which serves only as a disguise for the King of Terrors. We have no idea of such a swaggering and blustering Death as this of Mr. West’s. He has not invoked a ghastly spectre from the tomb, but has called up an old squalid ruffian from a night cellar, and crowned him ‘monarch of the universal world.’ The horse on which he rides is not ‘pale,’ but white. There is no gusto, no imagination in Mr. West’s colouring. As to his figure, the description gives an accurate idea of it enough. ‘His horse rushes forward with the universal wildness of a tempestuous element, breathing livid pestilence, and rearing and trampling with the vehemence of unbridled fury.’ The style of the figure corresponds to the style of the description. It is over-loaded and top-heavy. The chest of the animal is a great deal too long for the legs.

The painter has made amends for this splashing figure of the Pale Horse, by those of the White and Red Horse. They are like a couple of rocking-horses, and go as easy. Mr. West’s vicarious egotism obtrudes itself again offensively in speaking of the Rider on the White Horse. ‘As he is supposed,’ says the Catalogue, ‘to represent the Gospel, it was requisite that he should be invested with those exterior indications of purity, excellence, and dignity, which are associated in our minds with the name and offices of the Messiah.

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But it was not THE SAVIOUR healing and comforting the afflicted, or the meek and lowly JESUS, bearing with resignation the scorn and hatred of the scoffing multitude, that was to be represented;—it was the King of Kings going forth, conquering and to conquer. He is *therefore* painted with a solemn countenance, expressive of a mind filled with the thoughts of a great enterprise; and he advances onward in his sublime career with that serene Majesty, &c. Now this is surely an unwarrantable assumption of public opinion in a matter of taste. Christ is not represented in this picture as he was in Mr. West's two former pictures; but in all three he gives you to understand that he has reflected the true countenance and divine character of the Messiah. *Multum abludit imago*. The Christs in each picture have a different character indeed, but they only present a variety of meanness and insipidity. But the unwary spectator, who looks at the catalogue to know what he is to think of the picture, and reads all these *therefores* of *sublimity, serenity, purity*, &c. considers them as so many infallible inferences and demonstrations of the painter's skill.

Mr. West has been tolerably successful in the delineation of the neutral character of the 'Man on the Black Horse;' but 'the two wretched emaciated figures' of a man and woman before him, 'absorbed in the feelings of their own particular misery,' are not likely to excite any sympathy in the beholders. They exhibit the lowest stage of mental and physical imbecility, that could never by any possibility come to any good. In the domestic groupe in the foreground, 'the painter has attempted to excite the strongest degree of pity which his subject admitted, and to contrast the surrounding objects with images of tenderness and beauty;' and it is here that he has principally failed. The Dying Mother appears to have been in her lifetime a plaster-cast from the antique, stained with a little purple and yellow, to imitate the life. The 'Lovely Infant' that is falling from her breast, is a hideous little creature, with glazed eyes, and livid aspect, borrowed from the infant who is falling out of his mother's lap over the bridge, in Hogarth's Print of Gin-Lane. The Husband's features, who is placed in so pathetic an attitude, are cut out of the hardest wood, and of the deepest dye; and the surviving Daughter, who is stated 'to be sensible only to the loss she has sustained by the death of so kind a parent,' is neither better nor worse than the figures we meet with in the elegant frontispieces to history-books, or family stories, intended as Christmas presents to good little boys and girls. The foreshortening of the lower extremities, both of the Mother and Child, is wretchedly defective, either in drawing and colouring.

In describing 'the anarchy of the combats of men with beasts,' Mr. West has attained that sort of excellence which always arises

## HAYDON'S 'CHRIST'S AGONY

from a knowledge of the rules of composition. His lion, however, looks as if his face and velvet paws were covered with calf's skin, or leather gloves pulled carefully over them. So little is the appearance of hair given! The youth in this group, whom Mr. West celebrates for his muscular manly courage, has a fine rustic look of health and strength about him; but we think the other figure, with scowling swarthy face, striking at an animal, is superior in force of character and expression. In the back figure of the man holding his hand to his head, (with no very dignified action,) the artist has well imitated the bad colouring, and stiff inanimate drawing of Poussin. The remaining figures are not of much importance, or are striking only from their defects. Mr. West, however, omits no opportunity of discreetly sounding his own praise. 'The story of this group,' it is said, 'would have been incomplete, had the lions *not* been shown conquerors to a certain extent, by the two wounded men,' &c. As it is, it is perfect! Admirable critic! Again we are told, 'The pyramidal form of this large division is *perfected* by a furious bull,' &c. Nay, indeed, the form of the pyramid is even preserved in the title-page of the catalogue. The prettiest incident in the picture is the dove lamenting over its mate, just killed by the serpent. We do not deny Mr. West the praise of invention. Upon the whole, we think this the best coloured and most picturesque of all Mr. West's productions; and in all that relates to composition, and the introduction of the adjuncts of historical design, it shows, like his other works, the hand of a master. In the same room is the picture of Christ Rejected. Alas! how changed, and in how short a time! The colours are scarcely dry, and it already looks dingy, flat, and faded.

## HAYDON'S 'CHRIST'S AGONY IN THE GARDEN'

*The London Magazine.*

May 1821.

WE have prefixed to the present number an engraved outline of this picture (which we hope will be thought satisfactory), and we subjoin the following description of it in the words of the artist's catalogue.

'*Christ's Agony in the Garden.*—The manner of treating this subject in the present picture has not been taken from the account of any one Apostle [Evangelist] in particular, but from the united relations of the whole four.

'The moment selected for the expression of our Saviour is the moment when he acquiesces to (in) the necessity of his approaching sacrifice, after the previous struggle of apprehension.

*"Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done."*

## IN THE GARDEN '

' It is wished to give an air of submissive tenderness, while a quiver of agony still trembles on his features. The Apostles are resting a little behind, on a sort of garden-bank ; St. John in an unsound doze—St. James in a deep sleep—St. Peter has fallen into a disturbed slumber against a tree, while keeping guard with his sword, and is on the point of waking at the approach of light. Behind St. Peter, and stealing round the edge of the bank, comes the mean traitor, Judas, with a centurion, soldiers, and a crowd ; the centurion has stepped forward from his soldiers (who are marching up) to look with his torch, where Christ is retired and praying ; while Judas, alarmed lest he might be surprised too suddenly, presses back his hand to enforce caution and silence, and crouching down his malignant and imbecile face beneath his shoulders, he crawls forward like a reptile to his prey, his features shining with the anticipated rapture of successful treachery.

' It is an inherent feeling in human beings, to rejoice at the instant of a successful exercise of their own power, however despicably directed.

' The Apostles are supposed to be lit by the glory which emanates from Christ's head, and the crowd by the torches and lights about them.'

The printed catalogue contains also elaborate and able descriptions of Macbeth, the murder of Dentatus, and the judgment of Solomon, which have been already before the public.

We do not think *Christ's Agony in the Garden* the best picture in this collection, nor the most striking effort of Mr. Haydon's pencil. On the contrary, we must take leave to say, that we consider it as a comparative failure, both in execution and probable effect. We doubt whether, in point of policy, the celebrated artist would not have consulted his reputation and his ultimate interest more, by waiting till he had produced another work on the same grand and magnificent scale as his last, instead of trusting to the ebb of popularity, resulting from the exhibition of Christ's Entrance into Jerusalem, to float him through the present season. It is well, it may be argued, to keep much before the public, since they are apt to forget their greatest favourites : but they are also fastidious ; and it is safest not to appear always before them in the same, or a less imposing, attitude. It is better to rise upon them at every step, if possible (and there is yet room for improvement in our artist's productions), to take them by surprise, and compel admiration by new and extraordinary exertions—than to trust to their generosity or gratitude, to the lingering remains of their affection for old works, or their candid construction of some less arduous undertaking. A liberal and friendly critic has,

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indeed, declared on this occasion, that if the spirits of great men and lofty geniuses take delight in the other world, in contemplating what delighted them in this, then the shades of Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Correggio, can find no better employment than to descend again upon the earth, once more teeming with the birth of high art, and stand with hands crossed, and eyes uplifted in mute wonder, before Mr. Haydon's picture of Christ's Agony in the Garden. If we believed that the public in general sympathised seriously in this sentiment, we would not let a murmur escape us to disturb it ;—the opinion of the world, however erroneous, is not easily altered ; and if they are happy in their ignorance, let them remain so ;—but if the artist himself, to whom this august compliment has been paid, should find the hollowness of such hyperbolical commendation, a hint to him, as to its cause in the present instance, may not be thrown away. The public may, and must, be managed to a certain point ; that is, a little noise, and bustle, and officious enthusiasm, is necessary to catch their notice and fix their attention ; but then they should be left to see for themselves ; and after that, an artist should fling himself boldly and fairly into the huge stream of popularity (as Lord Byron swam across the Hellespont), stemming the tide with manly heart and hands, instead of buoying himself up with borrowed bloated bladders, and flimsy newspaper paragraphs. When a man feels his own strength, and the public confidence, he has nothing to do but to use the one, and not abuse the other. As his suspicions of the lukewarmness or backwardness of the public taste are removed, his jealousy of himself should increase. The town and the country have shown themselves willing, eager patrons of Mr. Haydon's *AT HOME* :—he ought to feel particular obligations not to invite them by sound of trumpet and beat of drum to an inferior entertainment ; but, like our advertising friend, Matthews, compass ' sea, earth, and air,' to keep up the *éclat* of his first and overwhelming *accueil* ! So much for advice ; now to criticism.

We have said, that we regard the present performance as a comparative failure ; and our reasons are briefly and plainly these following :

First, this picture is inferior in size to those that Mr. Haydon has of late years painted, and is so far a falling-off. It does not fill a given *stipulated* space in the world's eye. It does not occupy one side of a great room. It is the *Iliad* in a nutshell. It is only twelve feet by nine, instead of nineteen by sixteen ; and that circumstance tells against it with the unenlightened many, and with the judicious few. One great merit of Mr. Haydon's pictures is their size. Reduce him within narrow limits, and you cut off half his resources. His genius is gigantic. He is of the race of Brobdingnag, and not of

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Lilliput. He can manage a groupe better than a single figure : he can manage ten groupes better than one. He bestrides his art like a Colossus. The more you give him to do, the better he does it. Ardour, energy, boundless ambition, are the categories of his mind, the springs of his enterprises. He only asks ' ample room and verge enough.' Vastness does not confound him, difficulty rouses him, impossibility is the element in which he glories. He does not concentrate his powers in a single point, but expands them to the utmost circumference of his subject, with increasing impetus and rapidity. He must move great masses, he must combine extreme points, he must have striking contrasts and situations, he must have all sorts of characters and expressions ; these he hurries over, and dashes in with a decided, undistracted hand ;—set him to finish any one of these to an exact perfection, to make ' a hand, an ear, an eye,' that, in the words of an old poet, shall be ' worth an history,' and his power is gone. His *forte* is in motion, not in rest ; in complication and sudden effects, not in simplicity, subtlety, and endless refinement. As it was said in the Edinburgh Review, Mr. Haydon's compositions are masterly sketches ;—they are not, as it was said in Blackwood's Magazine, finished miniature pictures. We ourselves thought the Christ in the triumphant Entry into Jerusalem, the least successful part of that much admired picture : but there it was lost, or borne along in a crowd of bold and busy figures, in varied or violent actions. Here it is, not only the principal, but a solitary, and almost the only important figure : it is thrown in one corner of the picture like a lay figure in a painter's room ; the attitude is much like still-life : and the expression is (in our deliberate judgment) listless, feeble, laboured, neither expressing the agony or grief, nor the triumph of faith and resignation over it. It may be, we are wrong : but if so, we cannot help it. It is evident, however, that this head is painted on a different principle from that of the Christ last year. It is wrought with care, and even with precision, in the more detailed outlines : but it is timid, without relief, and without effect. The colour of the whole figure is, as if it had been smeared over, and neutralized, with some chalky tint. It does not stand out from the canvas, either in the general masses, or in the nicer inflections of the muscles and surface of the skin. It has a veil over it, not a glory round it. We ought, in justice, to add, that a black and white copy (we understand by a young lady) of the head of Christ has a more decided and finer apparent character. To what can this anomaly be owing ? Is it that Mr. Haydon's conception and drawing of character is good, but that his mastery in this respect leaves him, when he resigns the port-crayon ; and that, instead of giving additional force and beauty to the

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variations of form and expression, by the aid of colour and real light and shade, he only *smudges* them over with the pencil, and leaves the indications of truth and feeling more imperfect than he found them? We believe that Mr. Haydon generally copies from nature only with his port-crayon; and paints from conjecture or fancy. If so, it would account for what we have here considered as a difficulty. We have reason to believe that the old painters copied form, colour,—every thing, to the last syllable,—from nature. Indeed, we have seen two of the heads in the celebrated Madonna of the Garland, the Mother, and the fine head of Joseph, as original, finished studies of heads (the very same as they are in the large composition) in the collection at Burleigh-house. By the contrary practice, Mr. Haydon, as it appears to us, has habituated his hand and eye to giving only the contour of the features or the grosser masses:—when he comes to the details of those masses, he fails. Some one, we suspect from the style of this picture, has been advising our adventurous and spirited artist to try to finish, and he has been taking the advice: we would advise him to turn back, and consult the natural bent of his own genius. A man may avoid great faults or absurdities by the suggestion of friends: he can only attain positive excellence, or overcome great difficulties, by the unbiassed force of his own mind.

The crowd coming, with Judas at their head, to surprise our Saviour, is not to our taste. We dislike mobs in a picture. There is, however, a good deal of bustle and movement in the advancing group, and it contrasts almost too abruptly with the unimpassioned stillness and retirement of the figure of Christ. Judas makes a bad figure both in Mr. Haydon’s catalogue, and on his canvas. We think the original must have been a more profound and plausible-looking character than he is here represented. He should not grin and show his teeth. He was by all accounts, a grave, plodding, calculating personage, usurious, and with a cast of melancholy, and soon after went and hanged himself. Had Mr. Haydon been in Scotland when he made this sketch? Judas was not a laughing, careless wag; he was one of the ‘Melancholy Andrews.’—The best part of this picture is decidedly (in our opinion) the middle ground, containing the figures of the three Apostles. There is a dignity, a grace, a shadowy repose about them which approaches close indeed upon the great style in painting. We have only to regret that a person, who does so well at times, does not do well always. We are inclined to attribute such inequalities, and an appearance of haste and unconnectedness in some of Mr. Haydon’s plans, to distraction and hurry of mind, arising from a struggle with the difficulties both of art and of fortune; and as the last of these is now removed, we trust this

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circumstance will leave him at leisure to prosecute the grand design he has begun (the Raising of Lazarus) with a mind free and unembarrassed; and enable him to conclude it in a manner worthy of his own reputation, and that of his country!

## ON THE ELGIN MARBLES

*The London Magazine.*

*February 1822.*

'Who to the life an exact piece would make  
Must not from others' work a copy take;  
No, not from Rubens or Vandyke:  
Much less content himself to make it like  
Th' ideas and the images which lie  
In his own Fancy or his Memory.  
No: he before his sight must place  
The natural and living face;  
The real object must command  
Each judgment of his eye and motion of his hand.'

THE true lesson to be learnt by our students and professors from the Elgin Marbles, is the one which the ingenious and honest Cowley has expressed in the above spirited lines. The great secret is to recur at every step to nature—

'To learn  
Her manner, and with rapture taste her style.'

It is evident to any one who views these admirable remains of Antiquity (nay, it is acknowledged by our artists themselves, in despite of all the melancholy sophistry which they have been taught or have been teaching others for half a century) that the chief excellence of the figures depends on their having been copied from nature, and not from imagination. The communication of art with nature is here everywhere immediate, entire, palpable. The artist gives himself no fastidious airs of superiority over what he sees. He has not arrived at that stage of his progress described at much length in Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses, in which having served out his apprenticeship to nature, he can set up for himself in opposition to her. According to the old Greek form of drawing up the indentures in this case, we apprehend they were to last for life. At least, we can compare these Marbles to nothing but human figures petrified: they have every appearance of absolute *fac-similes* or casts taken from nature. The details are those of nature; the masses are those of nature; the forms are from nature; the action is from nature; the whole is from nature. Let any one, for instance, look at the leg of the Ilissus or River-God, which is bent under him—let him observe the swell and undulation of the calf, the inter-texture of the muscles,

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the distinction and union of all the parts, and the effect of action every where impressed on the external form, as if the very marble were a flexible substance, and contained the various springs of life and motion within itself, and he will own that art and nature are here the same thing. It is the same in the back of the Theseus, in the thighs and knees, and in all that remains unimpaired of these two noble figures. It is not the same in the cast (which was shown at Lord Elgin's) of the famous Torso by Michael Angelo, the style of which that artist appears to have imitated too well. There every muscle has obviously the greatest prominence and force given to it of which it is capable in itself, not of which it is capable in connexion with others. This fragment is an accumulation of mighty parts, without that play and re-action of each part upon the rest, without that 'alternate action and repose' which Sir Thomas Lawrence speaks of as characteristic of the Theseus and the Ilissus, and which are as inseparable from nature as waves from the sea. The learned, however, here make a distinction, and suppose that the truth of nature is, in the Elgin Marbles, combined with ideal forms. If by *ideal forms* they mean fine natural forms, we have nothing to object; but if they mean that the sculptors of the Theseus and Ilissus got the forms out of their own heads, and then tacked the truth of nature to them, we can only say, 'Let them look again, let them look again.' We consider the Elgin Marbles as a demonstration of the impossibility of separating art from nature without a proportionable loss at every remove. The utter absence of all setness of appearance proves that they were done as studies from actual models. The separate parts of the human body may be given from scientific knowledge:—their modifications or inflections can only be learnt by seeing them in action; and the truth of nature is incompatible with ideal form, if the latter is meant to exclude actually existing form. The mutual action of the parts cannot be determined where the object itself is not seen. That the forms of these statues are not common nature, such as we see it every day, we readily allow: that they were not select Greek nature, we see no convincing reason to suppose. That truth of nature, and ideal or fine form, are not always or generally united, we know; but how they can ever be united in art, without being first united in nature, is to us a mystery, and one that we as little believe as understand!

Suppose, for illustration's sake, that these Marbles were originally done as casts from actual nature, and then let us inquire whether they would not have possessed all the same qualities that they now display, granting only, that the forms were in the first instance selected with the eye of taste, and disposed with knowledge of the art and of the subject.

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First, the larger masses and proportions of entire limbs and divisions of the body would have been found in the casts, for they would have been found in nature. The back and trunk, and arms, and legs, and thighs would have been there, for these are parts of the natural man or actual living body, and not inventions of the artist, or *ideal* creations borrowed from the skies. There would have been the same sweep in the back of the Theseus; the same swell in the muscles of the arm on which he leans; the same division of the leg into calf and small, *i.e.* the same general results, or aggregation of parts, in the principal and most striking divisions of the body. The upper part of the arm would have been thicker than the lower, the thighs larger than the legs, the body larger than the thighs, in a cast taken from common nature; and in casts taken from the finest nature they would have been so in the same proportion, form, and manner, as in the statue of the Theseus, if the Theseus answers to the *idea* of the finest nature; for the idea and the reality must be the same; only, we contend, that the idea is taken from the reality, instead of existing by itself, or being the creature of fancy. That is, there would be the same grandeur of proportions and parts in a cast taken from finely developed nature, such as the Greek sculptors had constantly before them, naked and in action, that we find in the limbs and masses of bone, flesh, and muscle, in these much and justly admired remains.

Again, and incontestibly, there would have been, besides the grandeur of form, all the *minutiæ* and individual details in the cast that subsist in nature, and that find no place in the theory of *ideal* art—in the omission of which, indeed, its very grandeur is made to consist. The Elgin Marbles give a flat contradiction to this gratuitous separation of grandeur of design and exactness of detail, as incompatible in works of art, and we conceive that, with their whole ponderous weight to crush it, it will be difficult to set this theory on its legs again. In these majestic colossal figures, nothing is omitted, nothing is made out by negation. The veins, the wrinkles in the skin, the indications of the muscles under the skin (which appear as plainly to the anatomist as the expert angler knows from an undulation on the surface of the water what fish is playing with his bait beneath it), the finger-joints, the nails, every the smallest part cognisable to the naked eye, is given here with the same ease and exactness, with the same prominence, and the same subordination, that it would be in a cast from nature, *i.e.* in nature itself. Therefore, so far these things, *viz.* nature, a cast from it, and the Elgin Marbles, are the same; and all three are opposed to the fashionable and fastidious theory of the *ideal*. Look at Sir Joshua's picture of Puck, one of his finest-coloured, and most spirited performances. The fingers are

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mere *spuds*, and we doubt whether any one can make out whether there are four toes or five allowed to each of the feet. If there had been a young Silenus among the Elgin Marbles, we don't know that in some particulars it would have surpassed Sir Joshua's masterly sketch, but we are sure that the extremities, the nails, &c. would have been studies of natural history. The life, the spirit, the character of the grotesque and imaginary little being would not have made an abortion of any part of his natural growth or form.

Farther, in a cast from nature there would be, as a matter of course, the same play and flexibility of limb and muscle, or, as Sir Thomas Lawrence expresses it, the same 'alternate action and repose,' that we find so admirably displayed in the Elgin Marbles. It seems here as if stone could move: where one muscle is strained, another is relaxed, where one part is raised, another sinks in, just as in the ocean, where the waves are lifted up in one place, they sink proportionally low in the next; and all this modulation and affection of the different parts of the form by others arise from an attentive and co-instantaneous observation of the parts of a flexible body, where the muscles and bones act upon, and communicate with, one another like the ropes and pulleys in a machine, and where the action or position given to a particular limb or membrane naturally extends to the whole body. This harmony, this combination of motion, this unity of spirit diffused through the wondrous mass and every part of it, is the glory of the Elgin Marbles:—put a well-formed human body in the same position, and it will display the same character throughout; make a cast from it while in that position and action, and we shall still see the same bold, free, and comprehensive truth of design. There is no alliteration or antithesis in the style of the Elgin Marbles, no setness, squareness, affectation, or formality of appearance. The different muscles do not present a succession of *tumuli*, each heaving with big throes to rival the other. If one is raised, the other falls quietly into its place. Neither do the different parts of the body answer to one another, like shoulder-knots on a lacquey's coat or the different ornaments of a building. The sculptor does not proceed on architectural principles. His work has the freedom, the variety, and stamp of nature. The form of corresponding parts is indeed the same, but it is subject to inflection from different circumstances. There is no primness or *petit maître-ship*, as in some of the later antiques, where the artist seemed to think that flesh was glass or some other brittle substance; and that if it were put out of its exact shape it would break in pieces. Here, on the contrary, if the foot of one leg is bent under the body, the leg itself undergoes an entire alteration. If one side of the body is raised above the other, the original,

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or abstract, or *ideal* form of the two sides is not preserved strict and inviolable, but varies as it necessarily must do in conformity to the law of gravitation, to which all bodies are subject. In this respect, a cast from nature would be the same. Mr. Chantrey once made a cast from Wilson the Black. He put him into an attitude at first, and made the cast, but not liking the effect when done, got him to sit again and made use of the plaister of Paris once more. He was satisfied with the result; but Wilson who was tired with going through the operation, as soon as it was over, went and leaned upon a block of marble with his hands covering his face. The sagacious sculptor was so struck with the superiority of this natural attitude over those into which he had been arbitrarily put that he begged him (if possible) to continue in it for another quarter of an hour, and another impression was taken off. All three casts remain, and the last is a proof of the superiority of nature over art. The effect of lassitude is visible in every part of the frame, and the strong feeling of this affection, impressed on every limb and muscle, and venting itself naturally in an involuntary attitude which gave immediate relief, is that which strikes every one who has seen this fine study from the life. The casts from this man's figure have been much admired:—it is from no superiority of form: it is merely that, being taken from nature, they bear her 'image and superscription.'

As to expression, the Elgin Marbles (at least the Ilissus and Theseus) afford no examples, the heads being gone.

Lastly, as to the *ideal* form, we contend it is nothing but a selection of fine nature, such as it was seen by the ancient Greek sculptors; and we say that a sufficient approximation to this form may be found in our own country, and still more in other countries, at this day, to warrant the clear conclusion that, under more favourable circumstances of climate, manners, &c. no vain imagination of the human mind could come up to entire natural forms; and that actual casts from Greek models would rival the common Greek statues, or surpass them in the same proportion and manner as the Elgin Marbles do. Or if this conclusion should be doubted, we are ready at any time to produce at least one cast from living nature, which if it does not furnish practical proof of all that we have here advanced, we are willing to forfeit the last thing we can afford to part with—a theory!

If then the Elgin Marbles are to be considered as authority in subjects of art, we conceive the following principles, which have not hitherto been generally received or acted upon in Great Britain, will be found to result from them:—

1. That art is (first and last) the imitation of nature.
2. That the highest art is the imitation of the finest nature, that is

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to say, of that which conveys the strongest sense of pleasure or power, of the sublime or beautiful.

3. That the *ideal* is only the selecting a particular form which expresses most completely the idea of a given character or quality, as of beauty, strength, activity, voluptuousness, &c. and which preserves that character with the greatest consistency throughout.

4. That the *historical* is nature in action. With regard to the face, it is expression.

5. That grandeur consists in connecting a number of parts into a whole, and not in leaving out the parts.

6. That as grandeur is the principle of connexion between different parts, beauty is the principle of affinity between different forms, or rather gradual conversion into each other. The one harmonises, the other aggrandises our impressions of things.

7. That grace is the beautiful or harmonious in what relates to position or motion.

8. That grandeur of motion is unity of motion.

9. That strength is the giving the extremes, softness, the uniting them.

10. That truth is to a certain degree beauty and grandeur; since all things are connected, and all things modify one another in nature. Simplicity is also grand and beautiful for the same reason. Elegance is ease and lightness, with precision.

All this we have, we believe, said before; we shall proceed to such proofs or explanations as we are able to give of it in another article.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

*The London Magazine.*

May 1822.

AT the conclusion of a former article on this subject, we ventured to lay down some general principles, which we shall here proceed to elucidate in such manner as we are able.

1. The first was, that *art is (first and last) the imitation of nature.*

By nature, we mean actually existing nature, or some one object to be found in *rerum naturâ*, not an idea of nature existing solely in the mind, got from an infinite number of different objects, but which was never yet embodied in an individual instance. Sir Joshua Reynolds may be ranked at the head of those who have maintained the supposition that nature (or the universe of things) was indeed the groundwork or foundation on which art rested; but that the superstructure rose above it, that it towered by degrees above the world of realities, and was suspended in the regions of thought alone—that a middle

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form, a more refined idea, borrowed from the observation of a number of particulars, but unlike any of them, was the standard of truth and beauty, and the glittering phantom that hovered round the head of the genuine artist :

‘ So from the ground  
Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves  
More airy, last the bright consummate flower ! ’

We have no notion of this vague, equivocal theory of art, and contend, on the other hand, that each image in art should have a *tally* or corresponding prototype in some object in nature. Otherwise, we do not see the use of art at all : it is a mere superfluity, an incumbrance to the mind, a piece of ‘ laborious foolery ’—for the word, the mere name of any object or class of objects will convey the general idea, more free from particular details or defects than any the most neutral and indefinite representation that can be produced by forms and colours. The word Man, for instance, conveys a more filmy, impalpable, abstracted, and (according to this hypothesis) sublime idea of the species, than Michael Angelo’s Adam, or any real image can possibly do. If this then is the true object of art, the language of painting, sculpture, &c. becomes quite supererogatory. Sir Joshua and the rest contend, that nature (properly speaking) does not express any single individual, nor the whole mass of things as they exist, but a general principle, a *something common* to all these, retaining the perfections, that is, all in which they are alike, and abstracting the defects, namely, all in which they differ : so that, out of actual nature, we compound an artificial nature, never answering to the former in any one part of its mock-existence, and which last is the true object of imitation to the aspiring artist. Let us adopt this principle of abstraction as the rule of perfection, and see what havoc it will make in all our notions and feelings in such matters. If the *perfect* is the *intermediate*, why not confound all objects, all forms, all colours at once ? Instead of painting a landscape with blue sky, or white clouds, or green earth, or grey rocks and towers ; what should we say if the artist (so named) were to treat all these ‘ fair varieties ’ as so many imperfections and mistakes in the creation, and mass them altogether, by mixing up the colours on his palette in the same dull, leaden tone, and call this the true principle of epic landscape-painting ? Would not the thing be abominable, an abortion, and worse than the worst Dutch picture ? Variety then is one principle, one beauty in external nature, and not an everlasting source of pettiness and deformity, which must be got rid of at all events, before taste can set its seal upon the work, or fancy own it. But it may be said, it is different in things of the same species, and particularly in man, who

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is cast in a regular mould, which mould is one. What then, are we, on this pretext, to confound the difference of sex in a sort of hermaprodite softness, as Mr. Westall, Angelica Kauffman, and others, have done in their effeminate performances? Are we to leave out of the scale of legitimate art, the extremes of infancy and old age, as not *middle terms* in man's life? Are we to strike off from the list of available topics and sources of interest, the varieties of character, of passion, of strength, activity, &c.? Is everything to wear the same form, the same colour, the same unmeaning face? Are we only to repeat the same average idea of perfection, that is, our own want of observation and imagination, for ever, and to melt down the inequalities and excrescences of individual nature in the monotony of abstraction? Oh no! As well might we prefer the cloud to the rainbow; the dead corpse to the living moving body! So Sir Joshua debated upon Rubens's landscapes, and has a whole chapter to inquire whether *accidents in nature*, that is, rainbows, moonlight, sun-sets, clouds and storms, are the proper thing in the classical style of art. Again, it is urged that this is not what is meant, *viz.* to exclude different classes or characters of things, but that there is in each class or character a *middle point*, which is the point of perfection. What middle point? Or how is it ascertained? What is the middle age of childhood? Or are all children to be alike, dark or fair? Some of Titian's children have black hair, and others yellow or auburn: who can tell which is the most beautiful? May not a St. John be older than an infant Christ? Must not a Magdalen be different from a Madonna, a Diana from a Venus? Or may not a Venus have more or less gravity, a Diana more or less sweetness? What then becomes of the abstract idea in any of these cases? It varies as it does in nature; that is, there is indeed a general principle or character to be adhered to, but modified everlastingly by various other given or nameless circumstances. The highest art, like nature, is a living spring of unconstrained excellence, and does not produce a continued repetition of itself, like plaster-casts from the same figure. But once more it may be insisted, that in what relates to mere form or organic structure, there is necessarily a middle line or central point, anything short of which is deficiency, and anything beyond it excess, being the average form to which all the other forms included in the same species tend, and approximate more or less. Then this average form as it exists in nature should be taken as the model for art. What occasion to do it out of your own head, when you can bring it under the cognisance of your senses? Suppose a foot of a certain size and shape to be the standard of perfection, or if you will, the *mean proportion* between all other feet. How can you tell this so well as by

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seeing it? How can you copy it so well as by having it actually before you? But, you will say, there are particular minute defects in the best-shaped actual foot which ought not to be transferred to the imitation. Be it so. But are there not also particular minute beauties in the best, or even the worst shaped actual foot, which you will only discover by ocular inspection, which are reducible to no measurement or precepts, and which in finely-developed nature outweigh the imperfections a thousandfold, the proper general form being contained there also, and these being only the distinctly articulated parts of it, with their inflections which no artist can carry in his head alone? For instance, in the bronze monument of Henry VII. and his wife, in Westminster Abbey, by the famous Torregiano, the fingers and finger nails of the woman in particular are made out as minutely, and, at the same time, as beautifully as it is possible to conceive; yet they have exactly the effect that a cast taken from a fine female hand would have, with every natural joint, muscle, and nerve in complete preservation. Does this take from the beauty or magnificence of the whole? No: it aggrandises it. What then does it take from? Nothing but the conceit of the artist that he can paint a hand out of his own head (that is, out of nothing, and by reducing it again as near as can be to nothing, to a mere vague image) that shall be better than any thing in nature. A hand or foot is not *one thing*, because it is *one word* or name; and the painter of mere abstractions had better lay down his pencil at once, and be contented to write the descriptions or titles under works of art. Lastly, it may be objected that a whole figure can never be found perfect or equal; that the most beautiful arm will not belong to the same figure as the most beautiful leg, and so on. How is this to be remedied? By taking the arm from one, and the leg from the other, and clapping them both on the same body? That will never do; for however admirable in themselves, they will hardly agree together. One will have a different character from the other; and they will form a sort of natural patchwork. Or, to avoid this, will you take neither from actual models, but derive them from the neutralising medium of your own imagination? Worse and worse. Copy them from the same model, the best in all its parts you can get; so that, if you have to alter, you may alter as little as possible, and retain nearly the whole substance of nature.<sup>1</sup> You may depend upon it that what is so retained will alone be of any specific value. The rest may have a negative merit, but will be positively good for nothing. It will be to the vital truth and beauty of what is taken from the best nature,

<sup>1</sup> I believe this rule will apply to all except grotesques, which are evidently taken from opposite natures.

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like the piecing of an antique statue. It fills a gap, but nothing more. It is, in fact, a mental blank.

2. This leads us to the second point laid down before, which was, that *the highest art is the imitation of the finest nature, or in other words, of that which conveys the strongest sense of pleasure or power, of the sublime or beautiful.*

The artist does not pretend to *invent* an absolutely new class of objects, without any foundation in nature. He does not spread his palette on the canvas, for the mere finery of the thing, and tell us that it makes a brighter show than the rainbow, or even than a bed of tulips. He does not draw airy forms, moving above the earth, 'gay creatures of the element, that play i' th' plighted clouds,' and scorn the mere material existences, the concrete descendants of those that came out of Noah's Ark, and that walk, run, or creep upon it. No, he does not paint only what he has seen *in his mind's eye*, but the common objects that both he and others daily meet—rocks, clouds, trees, men, women, beasts, fishes, birds, or what he calls such. He is then an imitator by profession. He gives the appearances of things that exist outwardly by themselves, and have a distinct and independent nature of their own. But these know their own nature best; and it is by consulting them that he can alone trace it truly, either in the immediate details, or characteristic essences. Nature is consistent, unaffected, powerful, subtle: art is forgetful, apish, feeble, coarse. Nature is the original, and therefore right: art is the copy, and can but tread lamely in the same steps. Nature penetrates into the parts, and moves the whole mass: it acts with diversity, and in necessary connexion; for real causes never forget to operate, and to contribute their portion. Where, therefore, these causes are called into play to the utmost extent that they ever go to, there we shall have a strength and a refinement, that art may imitate but cannot surpass. But it is said that art can surpass this most perfect image in nature by combining others with it. What! by joining to the most perfect in its kind something less perfect? Go to,—this argument will not pass. Suppose you have a goblet of the finest wine that ever was tasted: you will not mend it by pouring into it all sorts of samples of an inferior quality. So the best in nature is the stint and limit of what is best in art: for art can only borrow from nature still; and, moreover, must borrow entire objects, for bits only make patches. We defy any landscape-painter to invent out of his own head, and by jumbling together all the different forms of hills he ever saw, by adding a bit to one, and taking a bit from another, anything equal to Arthur's seat, with the appendage of Salisbury Crags, that overlook Edinburgh. Why so?

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Because there are no levers in the mind of man equal to those with which nature works at her utmost need. No imagination can toss and tumble about huge heaps of earth as the ocean in its fury can. A volcano is more potent to rend rocks asunder than the most splashing pencil. The convulsions of nature can make a precipice more frightfully, or heave the backs of mountains more proudly, or throw their sides into waving lines more gracefully than all the *beau idéal* of art. For there is in nature not only greater power and scope, but (so to speak) greater knowledge and unity of purpose. Art is comparatively weak and incongruous, being at once a miniature and caricature of nature. We grant that a tolerable sketch of Arthur's seat, and the adjoining view, is better than Primrose Hill itself, (dear Primrose Hill ! ha ! faithless pen, canst thou forget its winding slopes, and valleys green, to which all Scotland can bring no parallel ?) but no pencil can transform or dandle Primrose Hill (our favourite Primrose Hill !) into a thing of equal character and sublimity with Arthur's seat. It gives us some pain to make this concession ; but in doing it, we flatter ourselves that no Scotchman will have the liberality in any way to return us the compliment. We do not recollect a more striking illustration of the difference between art and nature in this respect, than Mr. Martin's very singular and, in some things, very meritorious pictures. But he strives to outdo nature. He wants to give more than she does, or than his subject requires or admits. He sub-divides his groups into infinite littleness, and exaggerates his scenery into absolute immensity. His figures are like rows of shiny pins ; his mountains are piled up one upon the back of the other, like the stories of houses. He has no notion of the moral principle in all art, that a part may be greater than the whole. He reckons that if one range of lofty square hills is good, another range above that with clouds between must be better. He thus wearies the imagination, instead of exciting it. We see no end of the journey, and turn back in disgust. We are tired of the effort, we are tired of the monotony of this sort of reduplication of the same object. We were satisfied before ; but it seems the painter was not, and we naturally sympathise with him. This craving after quantity is a morbid affection. A landscape is not an architectural elevation. You may build a house as high as you can lift up stones with pulleys and levers, but you cannot raise mountains into the sky merely with the pencil. They lose probability and effect by striving at too much ; and, with their ceaseless throes, oppress the imagination of the spectator, and bury the artist's fame under them. The only error of these pictures is, however, that art here puts on her seven-league boots, and thinks it possible to steal a march upon nature. Mr. Martin might make Arthur's Seat sublime, if he chose to take the thing

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as it is; but he would be for squaring it according to the mould in his own imagination, and for clapping another Arthur's Seat on the top of it, to make the Calton Hill stare! Again, with respect to the human figure. This has an internal structure, muscles, bones, blood-vessels, &c. by means of which the external surface is operated upon according to certain laws. Does the artist, with all his generalisations, understand these, as well as nature does? Can he predict, with all his learning, that if a certain muscle is drawn up in a particular manner, it will present a particular appearance in a different part of the arm or leg, or bring out other muscles, which were before hid, with certain modifications? But in nature all this is brought about by necessary laws, and the effect is visible to those, and those only, who look for it in actual objects. This is the great and master-excellence of the Elgin Marbles, that they do not seem to be the outer surface of a hard and immovable block of marble, but to be actuated by an internal machinery, and composed of the same soft and flexible materials as the human body. The skin (or the outside) seems to be protruded or tightened by the natural action of a muscle beneath it. This result is miraculous in art: in nature it is easy and unavoidable. That is to say, art has to imitate or produce certain effects or appearances without the natural causes: but the human understanding can hardly be so true to those causes as the causes to themselves; and hence the necessity (in this sort of *simulated creation*) of recurring at every step to the actual objects and appearances of nature. Having shown so far how indispensable it is for art to identify itself with nature, in order to preserve the truth of imitation, without which it is destitute of value or meaning, it may be said to follow as a necessary consequence, that the only way in which art can rise to greater dignity or excellence is by finding out models of greater dignity and excellence in nature. Will any one, looking at the Theseus, for example, say that it could spring merely from the artist's brain, or that it could be done from a common, ill-made, or stunted body? The fact is, that its superiority consists in this, that it is a perfect combination of art and nature, or an identical, and as it were spontaneous copy of an individual picked out of a finer race of men than generally tread this ball of earth. Could it be made of a Dutchman's trunk-hose? No. Could it be made out of one of Sir Joshua's Discourses on the *middle form*? No. How then? Out of an eye, a head, and a hand, with sense, spirit, and energy to follow the finest nature, as it appeared exemplified in sweeping masses, and in subtle details, without pedantry, conceit, cowardice, or affectation! Some one was asking at Mr. H—yd—n's one day, as a few persons were looking at the cast from this figure,

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why the original might not have been done as a cast from nature. Such a supposition would account at least for what seems otherwise unaccountable—the incredible labour and finishing bestowed on the back and the other parts of this figure, placed at a prodigious height against the walls of a temple, where they could never be seen after they were once put up there. If they were done by means of a cast in the first instance, the thing appears intelligible, otherwise not. Our host stoutly resisted this imputation, which tended to deprive art of one of its greatest triumphs, and to make it as mechanical as a shaded profile. So far, so good. But the reason he gave was bad, *viz.* that the limbs could not remain in those actions long enough to be cast. Yet surely this would take a shorter time than if the model sat to the sculptor; and we all agreed that nothing but actual, continued, and intense observation of living nature could give the solidity, complexity, and refinement of imitation which we saw in the half animated, almost moving figure before us.<sup>1</sup> Be this as it may, the principle here stated does not reduce art to the imitation of what is understood by common or low life. It rises to any point of beauty or sublimity you please, but it rises only as nature rises exalted with it too. To hear these critics talk, one would suppose there was nothing in the world really worth looking at. The Dutch pictures were the best that they could paint: they had no other landscapes or faces before them. *Honi soit qui mal y pense.* Yet who is not alarmed at a Venus by Rembrandt? The Greek statues were (*cum grano salis*) Grecian youths and nymphs; and the women in the streets of Rome (it has been remarked<sup>2</sup>) look to this hour as if they had walked out of Raphael's pictures. Nature is always truth: at its best, it is beauty and sublimity as well; though Sir Joshua tells us in one of the papers in the IDLER, that in itself, or with reference to individuals, it is a mere tissue of meanness and deformity. Luckily, the Elgin Marbles say no to that conclusion: for they are decidedly *part and parcel thereof*. What constitutes fine nature, we shall inquire under another head. But we would remark here, that it can hardly be the *middle form*, since this principle, however it might determine certain general proportions and outlines, could never be intelligible in the details of nature, or applicable to those of art. Who will say that the form of a finger nail is just midway between a thousand others that he has *not* remarked: we are only struck with it when it is more than ordinarily beautiful, from symmetry, an

<sup>1</sup> Some one finely applied to the repose of this figure the words:

'—Sedet, in æternumque sedebit,  
Infelix Theseus.'

<sup>2</sup> By Mr. Coleridge.

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oblong shape, &c. The staunch partisans of this theory, however, get over the difficulty here spoken of, in practice, by omitting the details altogether, and making their works sketches, or rather what the French call *ébauches* and the English *daubs*.

3. *The IDEAL is only the selecting a particular form which expresses most completely the idea of a given character or quality, as of beauty, strength, activity, voluptuousness, &c. and which preserves that character with the greatest consistency throughout.*

Instead of its being true in general that the *ideal* is the *middle point*, it is to be found in the *extremes*; or, it is carrying any *idea* as far as it will go. Thus, for instance, a Silenus is as much an *ideal* thing as an Apollo, as to the principle on which it is done, *viz.* giving to every feature, and to the whole form, the utmost degree of grossness and sensuality that can be imagined, with this exception (which has nothing to do with the understanding of the question), that the *ideal* means by custom this extreme on the side of the good and beautiful. With this reserve, the *ideal* means always the *something more* of anything which may be anticipated by the fancy, and which must be found in nature (by looking long enough for it) to be expressed as it ought. Suppose a good heavy Dutch face (we speak by the proverb)—this, you will say, is gross; but it is not gross enough. You have an idea of something grosser, that is, you have seen something grosser and must seek for it again. When you meet with it, and have stamped it on the canvas, or carved it out of the block, this is the true *ideal*, namely, that which answers to and satisfies a preconceived idea; not that which is made out of an abstract idea, and answers to nothing. In the Silenus, also, according to the notion we have of the properties and character of that figure, there must be vivacity, slyness, wantonness, &c. Not only the image in the mind, but a real face may express all these combined together; another may express them more, and another most, which last is the *ideal*; and when the image in nature coalesces with, and gives a body, force, and reality to the idea in the mind, then it is that we see the true perfection of art. The forehead should be ‘villainous low;’ the eye-brows bent in; the eyes small and gloating; the nose *pugged*, and pointed at the end, with distended nostrils; the mouth large and shut; the cheeks swollen; the neck thick, &c. There is, in all this process, nothing of softening down, of compromising qualities, of finding out a *mean proportion* between different forms and characters; the sole object is to *intensify* each as much as possible. The only fear is ‘to o’erstep the modesty of nature,’ and run into caricature. This must be avoided; but the artist is only to stop short of this. He must not outrage probability. We must have seen a class of such

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faces, or something so nearly approaching, as to prevent the imagination from revolting against them. The forehead must be low, but not so low as to lose the character of humanity in the brute. It would thus lose all its force and meaning. For that which is extreme and ideal in one species is nothing, if, by being pushed too far, it is merged in another. Above all, there should be *keeping* in the whole and every part. In the Pan, the horns and goat's feet, perhaps, warrant the approach to a more *animal* expression than would otherwise be allowable in the human features; but yet this tendency to excess must be restrained within certain limits. If Pan is made into a beast, he will cease to be a God! Let Momus distend his jaws with laughter, as far as laughter can stretch them, but no farther; or the expression will be that of pain and not of pleasure. Besides, the overcharging the expression or action of any one feature will suspend the action of others. The whole face will no longer laugh. But this universal suffusion of broad mirth and humour over the countenance is very different from a placid smile, midway between grief and joy. Yet a classical Momus, by modern theories of the *ideal*, ought to be such a nonentity in expression. The ancients knew better. They pushed art in such subjects to the verge of 'all we hate,' while they felt the point beyond which it could not be urged with propriety, *i.e.* with truth, consistency, and consequent effect. There is no difference, in philosophical reasoning, between the mode of art here insisted on, and the *ideal* regularity of such figures as the Apollo, the Hercules, the Mercury, the Venus, &c. All these are, as it were, *personifications, essences, abstractions* of certain qualities of virtue in human nature, not of human nature in general, which would make nonsense. Instead of being abstractions of all sorts of qualities jumbled together in a neutral character, they are in the opposite sense *abstractions* of some single quality or customary combination of qualities, leaving out all others as much as possible, and imbuing every part with that one predominant character to the utmost. The Apollo is a representation of graceful dignity and mental power; the Hercules of bodily strength; the Mercury of swiftness; the Venus of female loveliness, and so on. In these, in the Apollo is surely implied and found more grace than usual; in the Hercules more strength than usual; in the Mercury more lightness than usual; in the Venus more softness than usual. Is it not so? What then becomes of the pretended *middle form*? One would think it would be sufficient to prove this, to ask, 'Do not these statues differ from one another? And is this difference a defect?' It would be ridiculous to call them by different names, if they were not supposed to represent different and peculiar characters: sculptors

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should, in that case, never carve anything but the statue of a *man*, the statue of a *woman*, &c. and this would be the name of perfection. This theory of art is not at any rate justified by the history of art. An extraordinary quantity of bone and muscle is as proper to the Hercules as his club, and it would be strange if the Goddess of Love had not a more delicately rounded form, and a more languishing look withal, than the Goddess of Hunting. That a form combining and blending the properties of both, the downy softness of the one, with the elastic buoyancy of the other, would be more perfect than either, we no more see than that grey is the most perfect of colours. At any rate, this is the march neither of nature nor of art. It is not denied that these antique sculptures are models of the *ideal*; nay, it is on them that this theory boasts of being founded. Yet they give a flat contradiction to its insipid mediocrity. Perhaps some of them have a slight bias to the false *ideal*, to the smooth and uniform, or the negation of nature: any error on this side is, however, happily set right by the Elgin Marbles, which are the paragons of sculpture and the mould of form.—As the *ideal* then requires a difference of character in each figure as a whole, so it expects the same character (or a corresponding one) to be stamped on each part of every figure. As the legs of a Diana should be more muscular and adapted for running, than those of a Venus or a Minerva, so the skin of her face ought to be more tense, bent on her prey, and hardened by being exposed to the winds of heaven. The respective characters of lightness, softness, strength, &c. should pervade each part of the surface of each figure, but still varying according to the texture and functions of the individual part. This can only be learned or practised from the attentive observation of nature in those forms in which any given character or excellence is most strikingly displayed, and which has been selected for imitation and study on that account.—Suppose a dimple in the chin to be a mark of voluptuousness; then the Venus should have a dimple in the chin; and she has one. But this will imply certain correspondent indications in other parts of the features, about the corners of the mouth, a gentle undulation and sinking in of the cheek, as if it had just been pinched, and so on: yet so as to be consistent with the other qualities of roundness, smoothness, &c. which belong to the idea of the character. Who will get all this and embody it out of the idea of a *middle form*, I cannot say: it may be, and has been, got out of the idea of a number of distinct enchanting graces in the mind, and from some heavenly object unfolded to the sight!

4. *That the historical is nature in action. With regard to the face, it is expression.*

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Hogarth's pictures are true history. Every feature, limb, figure, group, is instinct with life and motion. He does not take a subject and place it in a position, like a lay figure, in which it stirs neither limb nor joint. The scene moves before you : the face is like a frame-work of flexible machinery. If the mouth is distorted with laughter, the eyes swim in laughter. If the forehead is knit together, the cheeks are puckered up. If a fellow squints most horribly, the rest of his face is awry. The muscles pull different ways, or the same way, at the same time, on the surface of the picture, as they do in the human body. What you see is the reverse of *still life*. There is a continual and complete action and re-action of one variable part upon another, as there is in the Elgin Marbles. If you pull the string of a bow, the bow itself is bent. So is it in the strings and wires that move the human frame. The action of any one part, the contraction or relaxation of any one muscle, extends more or less perceptibly to every other :

'Thrills in each nerve, and lives along the line.'

Thus the celebrated *Iô* of Correggio is imbued, steeped, in a manner in the same voluptuous feeling all over—the same passion languishes in her whole frame, and communicates the infection to the feet, the back, and the reclined position of the head. This is history, not carpenter's work. Some painters fancy that they paint history, if they get the measurement from the foot to the knee and put four bones where there are four bones. This is not our idea of it ; but we think it is to show how one part of the body sways another in action and in passion. The last relates chiefly to the expression of the face, though not altogether. Passion may be shown in a clenched fist as well as in clenched teeth. The face, however, is the throne of expression. Character implies the feeling, which is fixed and permanent ; expression that which is occasional and momentary, at least, technically speaking. Portrait treats of objects as they are ; history of the events and changes to which they are liable. And so far history has a double superiority ; or a double difficulty to overcome, *viz.* in the rapid glance over a number of parts subject to the simultaneous action of the same law, and in the scope of feeling required to sympathise with the critical and powerful movements of passion. It requires greater capacity of muscular motion to follow the progress of a carriage in violent motion, than to lean upon it standing still. If, to describe passion, it were merely necessary to observe its outward effects, these, perhaps, in the prominent points, become more visible and more tangible as the passion is more intense. But it is not only necessary to see the effects, but to discern the cause, in order to make the one

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true to the other. No painter gives more of intellectual or impassioned appearances than he understands or feels. It is an axiom in painting that sympathy is indispensable to truth of expression. Without it, you get only caricatures, which are not the thing. But to sympathise with passion, a greater fund of sensibility is demanded in proportion to the strength or tenderness of the passion. And as he feels most of this whose face expresses most passion, so he also feels most by sympathy whose hand can describe most passion. This amounts nearly, we take it, to a demonstration of an old and very disputed point. The same reasoning might be applied to poetry, but this is not the place.—Again, it is easier to paint a portrait than an historical face, because the head *sits* for the first, but the expression will hardly *sit* for the last. Perhaps those passions are the best subjects for painting, the expression of which may be retained for some time, so as to be better caught, which throw out a sort of lambent fire, and leave a reflected glory behind them, as we see in Madonnas, Christ's heads, and what is understood by sacred subjects in general. The violences of human passion are too soon over to be copied by the hand, and the mere conception of the internal workings is not here sufficient, as it is in poetry. A portrait is to history what still-life is to portraiture : that is, the whole remains the same while you are doing it ; or while you are occupied about each part, the rest wait for you. Yet, what a difference is there between taking an original portrait and making a copy of one ! This shows that the face in its most ordinary state is continually varying and in action. So much of history is there in portrait !—No one should pronounce definitively on the superiority of history over portrait, without recollecting Titian's heads. The finest of them are very nearly (say quite) equal to the finest of Raphael's. They have almost the look of *still-life*, yet each part is decidedly influenced by the rest. Everything is *relative* in them. You cannot put any other eye, nose, lip in the same face. As is one part, so is the rest. You cannot fix on any particular beauty ; the charm is in the whole. They have least action, and the most expression of any portraits. They are doing nothing, and yet all other business seems insipid in comparison of their thoughts. They are silent, retired, and do not court observation ; yet you cannot keep your eyes from them. Some one said, that you would be as cautious of your behaviour in a room where a picture of Titian's was hung, as if there was somebody by—so entirely do they look you through. They are the least tiresome *furniture-company* in the world !

5. *Grandeur consists in connecting a number of parts into a whole, and not leaving out the parts.*

Sir Joshua lays it down that the great style in art consists in the

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omission of the details. A greater error never man committed. The great style consists in preserving the masses and general proportions; not in omitting the details. Thus, suppose, for illustration's sake, the general form of an eye-brow to be commanding and grand. It is of a certain size, and arched in a particular curve. Now, surely, this general form or outline will be equally preserved, whether the painter daubs it in, in a bold, rough way, as Reynolds or perhaps Rembrandt would, or produces the effect by a number of hair-lines arranged in the same form as Titian sometimes did; and in his best pictures. It will not be denied (for it cannot) that the characteristic form of the eye-brow would be the same, or that the effect of the picture at a small distance would be nearly the same in either case; only in the latter, it would be rather more perfect, as being more like nature. Suppose a strong light to fall on one side of a face, and a deep shadow to involve the whole of the other. This would produce two distinct and large masses in the picture; which answers to the conditions of what is called the grand style of composition. Well, would it destroy these masses to give the smallest veins or variation of colour or surface in the light side, or to shade the other with the most delicate and elaborate *chiaro-scuro*? It is evident not; from common sense, from the practice of the best masters, and, lastly, from the example of nature, which contains both the larger masses, the strongest contrasts, and the highest finishing, within itself. The integrity of the whole, then, is not impaired by the indefinite subdivision and smallness of the parts. The grandeur of the ultimate effects depends entirely on the arrangement of these in a certain form or under certain masses. The Ilissus, or River-god, is floating in his proper element, and is, in appearance, as firm as a rock, as pliable as a wave of the sea. The artist's breath might be said to mould and play upon the undulating surface. The whole is expanded into noble proportions, and heaves with general effect. What then? Are the parts unfinished; or are they not there? No; they are there with the nicest exactness, but in due subordination; that is, they are there as they are found in fine nature; and float upon the general form, like straw or weeds upon the tide of ocean. Once more: in Titian's portraits we perceive a certain character stamped upon the different features. In the Hippolito de Medici the eye-brows are angular, the nose is peaked, the mouth has sharp corners, the face is (so to speak) a pointed oval. The drawing in each of these is as careful and distinct as can be. But the unity of intention in nature, and in the artist, does not the less tend to produce a general grandeur and impressiveness of effect; which at first sight it is not easy to account for. To combine a number of particulars to one end is not to omit them altogether; and

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is the best way of producing the grand style, because it does this without either affectation or slovenliness.

6. The sixth rule we proposed to lay down was, that *as grandeur is the principle of connexion between different parts; beauty is the principle of affinity between different forms, or their gradual conversion into each other. The one harmonises, the other aggrandises, our impressions of things.*

There is a harmony of colours and a harmony of sounds, unquestionably: why then there should be all this squeamishness about admitting an original harmony of forms as the principle of beauty and source of pleasure there we cannot understand. It is true, that there is in organised bodies a certain standard of form to which they approximate more or less, and from which they cannot very widely deviate without shocking the sense of custom, or our settled expectations of what they ought to be. And hence it has been pretended that there is in all such cases a *middle central form*, obtained by leaving out the peculiarities of all the others, which alone is the pure standard of truth and beauty. A conformity to custom is, we grant, one condition of beauty or source of satisfaction to the eye, because an abrupt transition shocks; but there is a conformity (or correspondence) of colours, sounds, lines, among themselves, which is soft and pleasing for the same reason. The average or customary form merely determines what is *natural*. A thing cannot please, unless it is to be found in nature; but that which is natural is most pleasing, according as it has other properties which in themselves please. Thus the colour of a cheek must be the natural complexion of a human face;—it would not do to make it the colour of a flower or a precious stone;—but among complexions ordinarily to be found in nature, that is most beautiful which would be thought so abstractedly, or in itself. Yellow hair is not the most common, nor is it a *mean proportion* between the different colours of women's hair. Yet, who will say that it is not the most beautiful? Blue or green hair would be a defect and an anomaly, not because it is not the *medium* of nature, but because it is not in nature at all. To say that there is no difference in the sense of form except from custom, is like saying that there is no difference in the sensation of smooth or rough. Judging by analogy, a gradation or symmetry of form must affect the mind in the same manner as a gradation of recurrence at given intervals of tones or sounds; and if it does so in fact, we need not inquire further for the principle. Sir Joshua (who is the arch-heretic on this subject) makes grandeur or sublimity consist in the middle form, or abstraction of all peculiarities; which is evidently false, for grandeur and sublimity arise from extraordinary strength, magnitude, &c. or in a word, from an excess of

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power, so as to startle and overawe the mind. But as sublimity is an excess of power, beauty is, we conceive, the blending and harmonising different powers or qualities together, so as to produce a soft and pleasurable sensation. That it is not the middle form of the species seems proved in various ways. First, because one species is more beautiful than another, according to common sense. A rose is the queen of flowers, in poetry at least; but in this philosophy any other flower is as good. A swan is more beautiful than a goose; a stag than a goat. Yet if custom were the test of beauty, either we should give no preference, or our preference would be reversed. Again, let us go back to the human face and figure. A straight nose is allowed to be handsome, that is, one that presents nearly a continuation of the line of the forehead, and the sides of which are nearly parallel. Now this cannot be the mean proportion of the form of noses. For, first, most noses are broader at the bottom than at the top, inclining to the negro head, but none are broader at top than at the bottom, to produce the Greek form as a balance between both. Almost all noses sink in immediately under the forehead bone, none ever project there; so that the nearly straight line continued from the forehead cannot be a mean proportion struck between the two extremes of convex and concave form in this feature of the face. There must, therefore, be some other principle of symmetry, continuity, &c. to account for the variation from the prescribed rule. Once more (not to multiply instances tediously), a double calf is undoubtedly the perfection of beauty in the form of the leg. But this is a rare thing. Nor is it the medium between two common extremes. For the muscles seldom swell enough to produce this excrescence, if it may be so called, and never run to an excess there, so as, by diminishing the quantity, to subside into proportion and beauty. But this second or lower calf is a connecting link between the upper calf and the small of the leg, and is just like a second chord or half-note in music. We conceive that any one who does not perceive the beauty of the Venus de Medicis, for instance, in this respect, has not the proper perception of form in his mind. As this is the most disputable, or at least the most disputed part of our theory, we may, perhaps, have to recur to it again, and shall leave an opening for that purpose.

7. *That grace is the beautiful or harmonious in what relates to position or motion.*

There needs not much be said on this point; as we apprehend it will be granted that, whatever beauty is as to the form, grace is the same thing in relation to the use that is made of it. Grace, in writing, relates to the transitions that are made from one subject to another, or to the movement that is given to a passage. If one thing leads to

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another, or an idea or illustration is brought in without effect, or without making a *boggle* in the mind, we call this a graceful style. Transitions must in general be gradual and pieced together. But sometimes the most violent are the most graceful, when the mind is fairly tired out and exhausted with a subject, and is glad to leap to another as a repose and relief from the first. Of these there are frequent instances in Mr. Burke's writings, which have something Pindaric in them. That which is not beautiful in itself, or in the mere form, may be made so by position or motion. A figure by no means elegant may be put in an elegant position. Mr. Kean's figure is not good; yet we have seen him throw himself into attitudes of infinite spirit, dignity, and grace. John Kemble's figure, on the contrary, is fine in itself; and he has only to show himself to be admired. The direction in which anything is moved has evidently nothing to do with the shape of the thing moved. The one may be a circle and the other a square. Little and deformed people seem to be well aware of this distinction, who, in spite of their unpromising appearance, usually assume the most imposing attitudes, and give themselves the most extraordinary airs imaginable.

8. *Grandeur of motion is unity of motion.*

This principle hardly needs illustration. Awkwardness is contradictory or disjointed motion.

9. *Strength in art is giving the extremes, softness the uniting them.*

There is no incompatibility between strength and softness, as is sometimes supposed by frivolous people. Weakness is not refinement. A shadow may be twice as deep in a finely coloured picture as in another, and yet almost imperceptible, from the gradations that lead to it, and blend it with the light. Correggio had prodigious strength, and greater softness. Nature is strong and soft, beyond the reach of art to imitate. Softness then does not imply the absence of considerable extremes, but it is the interposing a third thing between them, to break the force of the contrast. Guido is more soft than strong. Rembrandt is more strong than soft.

10. And lastly. *That truth is, to a certain degree, beauty and grandeur, since all things are connected, and all things modify one another in nature. Simplicity is also grand and beautiful for the same reason. Elegance is ease and lightness, with precision.*

This last head appears to contain a number of *gratis dicta*, got together for the sake of completing a decade of propositions. They have, however, some show of truth, and we should add little clearness to them by any reasoning upon the matter. So we will conclude here for the present.

# EXHIBITION OF LIVING ARTISTS

## EXHIBITION OF LIVING ARTISTS

(BY A STRANGER)

*The Scotsman.*

*April 20, 1822.*

SCOTLAND seems to have been hitherto the country of the Useful rather than of the Fine Arts. We are more prone to study realities than appearances: we are not a luxurious people, and have paid little attention to the most evanescent of all luxuries, the luxury of the eye. A stranger is struck, in visiting Edinburgh, to see no looking-glasses in the best furnished rooms. Is this the effect of ancient bigotry, which banished them as symbols of vanity and of the pride of human life? Or is it a systematic economy, which allows of nothing superfluous? Or is it indifference to the mere shows and glittering shadows of things? On any of these suppositions, the bare walls of our houses augur ill for the progress and cultivation of art. It is not likely that where we are satisfied with a piece of plaster or wainscoting in lieu of the image of our own sweet persons, that there the dull canvas should become

'A lucid mirror, in which nature sees  
All her reflected features.'

Scotland is of all other countries in the world perhaps the one in which the question, 'What is the use of that?' is asked oftenest. But where this is the case, the Fine Arts cannot flourish, or attain their high and palmy state, or scarcely creep out of the ground to expose themselves to the 'eager and the nipping air' of this kind of rigid catechising scrutiny; for they are their own sole end and use, and in themselves 'sum all delight.' It may be said of the Fine Arts that 'they toil not, neither do they spin,' but are like the lilies of the valley, lovely in themselves, graceful and beautiful, and precious in the sight of all but the blind. They do not furnish us with food or raiment, it is true; but they please the eye, they haunt the imagination, they solace the heart. If after that you ask the question, *Cui bono?* there is no answer to be returned.

With all our desire to encourage native talent, we cannot say much in praise of the present Exhibition. Probably the crust of prejudice, and antipathy to painting as a frivolous or meretricious art, has lain too long upon the national understanding for it to thaw at once in the ray of royal and doubtful patronage. The cold, dry, barren, unmanured soil cannot be expected to shoot forth into luxuriance with the first breath of a northern spring. The mind must be gradually prepared; the seed must be sown; prejudices must be

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removed; the habits of a people must undergo a change,—must become comparatively soft and effeminate. Whether this is ‘a consummation devoutly to be wished,’ is a question beyond our fathom: but the change must take place, before the Fine Arts, those *deliciæ humanæ generis*, can be had in perfection. Look at art as it appears to its best advantage in the Waterloo Rooms. To speak out, has it not a *pauper* appearance? It seems to have just emancipated itself from the forge, the workshop, and the factory. It looks meagre, dry, hard, mechanical, ill-fed. Instead of being seated on a throne, it is placed upon a cutty-stool;—for a robe whose woof is Iris-dipped, it shivers in a cold, scanty penance-sheet. Kirk Assemblies have overlaid it: public opinion has pinched and nipped it into nothing; and by force of being despised, it has become mean and despicable. Such is the general appearance of this Fourth Annual Exhibition of Living Artists.—But are there no splendid exceptions to redeem this censure, and shew a capability for the highest things? We wish there were. But we cannot charge our memories with a single *chef-d’œuvre* even in embryo; nor by diligently turning over the catalogue recall one glimpse of the diviner soul of art. Yet we live in hope. Nay, what have we not to hope from The Heart of Mid-Lothian? The Lilly of St. Leonards’ has not long bloomed, never to hang its sweet head and die; nor (to compare small things with great) was the name of our Scottish Teniers, WILKIE, always heard of. Awake then, Genius of Scottish landscape, and look out with ecstatic wonder from the top of Arthur’s Seat; or thou, lovely Portraiture, play with the golden tresses of Caledonia’s fairest fair, or drink, till thou art drunk with gazing, the dark lustre of their eyes, and stamp these heaven-pencilled meeting eye-brows on the tablet of memory! It is a shame to see no better pictures of female grace and beauty in the land of MARY STUART and of Love, and where Venus might hold her various, laughing court, and build her throne alike of ebony, or ivory and gold! But soft—or the Rev. Mr. —, the Lecturer of St. — will hear us!

To put an end to this rhapsody, and descend to particulars.

*View on the Firth, near Callander*, by Miss Jane Nasmyth and *View of Abbotsford, the Seat of Sir Walter Scott*, by Mrs. Terry, are both pretty. They are a kind of family-pictures, with a little too much finishing and enamel. The trees of the Nasmyths, male and female, are *genealogical*. Their plants and shrubs seem the property of the herbalist. Yet there is considerable merit, of no inconsiderable kind, both in the selection and execution of the pieces which bear this very respectable name.

*Caernarvon Castle, North Wales*, Copley Fielding, is a rich and

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striking landscape. It is an evident imitation of Claude, but without his repose and harmony. The clouds and trees are too *flickering* by half. They catch the light not as if they were clouds and trees, but as if they were made of tin and copper. Mr. Fielding's pencil is too ambitious, and 'o'ersteps the modesty of nature.' This always leads to a want of effect, as well as of truth and beauty.

*Portrait of Professor Wallace*, by John Watson, is not ill-coloured, but shows nothing of the genius of the man of science. We don't know whether this is the fault of nature or the artist.

*Fine Evening after Rain. North Wales.* By J. Linnell.—It is Mr. Linnell's boast, to choose subjects that nobody but himself would venture upon, and to give them an effect which few persons but himself could produce. The foreground of this picture is a kind of clayey purple soil, and looks very much like chocolate smeared over a deal board. The rest is nearly of a piece with it; but the green spotted hill in the distance is as fresh and brilliant as if nature's own hand had painted it. It is like looking at the mingled effects of sunshine and of rain through a window. Mr. Linnell's landscapes are an *experimentum crucis*, to shew that the worst selection of nature is better than any fanciful composition. We cannot, however, extend this limited praise to a *View near Bayswater*, and *Evening, a storm*, which are both detestable, crude *extravaganzas*.

*Interior of Roslyn Chapel*—Patrick Gibson—has merit.

*Mending a Stocking*—Walter Geikie—is true and natural. The same feeling pervades the whole figure; which is really like an old woman mending a stocking. *The Grassmarket, Edinburgh*, by the same artist, has some clever bits in it, but has altogether a disagreeable and impoverished appearance.

*The Right Hon. the Lord Provost's Officer*, by John Kay. This Gentleman is walking out of the picture. We could wish that the artist had waited till he was fairly gone.

*Portrait of Professor Pillans*—Henry Raeburn, R.A.—is an excellent likeness, well painted.

*Portrait of his daughter*—W. J. Thomson—has a pleasing effect, with a very natural and arch expression.

*Portrait of Miss Wilson, daughter of Professor Wilson*—John Watson—is rather affected, and wild as the mountain breeze.

*The Borough—Market Day, from Tam O'Shanter*—Alex Carse. Let no man paint after Burns. He held the pencil in his own hands.

*Boy taking Physic*—John Pairman. You may swear that this is a bitter Potion. The artist has here caught an expression from nature

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with some effect.—His Lancastrian School is a vile composition, but perhaps worthy of the subject.

*Portrait of H. W. Williams*—Henry Raeburn, R.A. We were disappointed in this head, after seeing Mr. Williams's very classical exhibition of water-colour drawings. It has not the air of a head accustomed to look at nature. It will hardly do out of the reading desk.

*Portrait of an Officer of the 18th Hussars*—William Allan. This is a portrait of a pair of regimental small clothes, or rather of loose trunk-hose. We learn from it the costume of the regiment.

*Model of a Sculptor at Work*—D. Dunbar. We would not wish to hurt, yet we can say nothing in favour of the productions of this gentleman's chisel.

*Bust of the Late John Rennie*—F. J. Chantry, R.A. This is a fine architectural head.

*Bust of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* By the same inimitable Artist.

'To be direct and honest, is not safe.'

It is difficult to get at the expression of this characteristic head. It wears a kind of marble mask: the face, too, is anonymous. The forehead contains piles of musty law, and of bright never-ending romances; the eyes glimmer at the world under fringed lids, as if the world saw not again: the mouth cares not for the world, nor for anything but itself. The lips are thin, and half curled up at some triumph, some flaw that the wary eye has just detected. After naming this son of genius and close policy, we would throw down our pen, but there is another bust in the room of the Author of the *Man of Feeling*, old, but still sensitive and interesting; and to it we bid *Hail and Farewell!*

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*The London Magazine.*

May 1822.

THERE has been lately exhibited at the Calton Convening Room, Edinburgh, a collection of views in Greece, Italy, Sicily, and the Ionian Isles, painted in water colours by Mr. Hugh Williams, a native of Scotland, which themselves do honour to the talents of the artist, as the attention they have excited does to the taste of the northern capital. It is well; for the exhibition in that town of the works of living artists (to answer to our Somerset House exhibition) required some set-off. Mr. Williams has made the

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*amende honorable*, for his country, to the offended genius of art, and has stretched out under the far-famed Calton Hill, and in the eye of Arthur's Seat, fairy visions of the fair land of Greece, that Edinburgh belles and beaux repair to see with cautious wonder and well-regulated delight. It is really a most agreeable novelty to the passing visitant to see the beauty of the North, the radiant beauty of the North, enveloped in such an atmosphere, and set off by such a background. Oriental skies pour their molten lustre on Caledonian charms. The slender, lovely, taper waist (made more taper, more lovely, more slender by the stay-maker), instead of being cut in two by the keen blasts that rage in Prince's street, is here supported by warm languid airs, and a thousand sighs, that breathe from the vale of Tempe. Do not those fair tresses look brighter as they are seen hanging over a hill in Arcadia, than when they come in contact with the hard grey rock of the castle? Do not those fair blue eyes look more translucent as they glance over some classic stream? What can vie with that alabaster skin but marble temples, dedicated to the Queen of Love? What can match those golden freckles but glittering sunsets behind Mount Olympus? Here, in one corner of the room, stands the Hill of the Muses, and there is a group of Graces under it! There played the NINE on immortal lyres, and here sit the critical but admiring Scottish fair, with the catalogue in their hands, reading the quotations from Lord Byron's verses with liquid eyes and lovely vermilion lips—would that they spoke English, or any thing but Scotch!—Poor is this irony! Vain the attempt to reconcile Scottish figures with Attic scenery! What land can rival Greece? What earthly flowers can compare with the colours in the sky? What living beauty can recall the dead? For in that word, GREECE, there breathe three thousand years of fame that has no date to come! Over that land hovers a light, brighter than that of suns, softer than that which vernal skies shed on halcyon seas, the light that rises from the tomb of virtue, genius, liberty! Oh! thou Uranian Venus, thou that never art, but wast and art to be; thou that the eye sees not, but that livest for ever in the heart; thou whom men believe and know to be, for thou dwellest in the desires and longings, and hunger of the mind; thou that art a Goddess, and we thy worshippers, say dost thou not smile for ever on this land of Greece, and shed thy purple light over it, and blend thy choicest blandishments with its magic name? But here (in the Calton Convening Room, in Waterloo place, close under the Melville monument—strange contradiction!) another Greece grows on the walls—other skies are to be seen, ancient temples rise, and modern Grecian ladies walk. Here towers Mount Olympus, where Gods once sat—that is the top of a hill in Arcadia—(who

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would think that the eyes would ever behold a form so visionary, that they would ever see an image of that, which seems only a delicious vanished sound?) this is Corinth—that is the Parthenon—there stands Thebes in Bœotia—that is the Plain of Platæa,—yonder is the city of Syracuse, and the Temple of Minerva Sunias, and there the scite of the gardens of Alcinous.

‘Close to the gate a spacious garden lies,  
From storms defended, and inclement skies;  
Tall thriving trees confess the fruitful mould,  
The reddening apple ripens here to gold.  
Here the blue fig with luscious juice o’erflows,  
With deeper red the full pomegranate glows;  
The branch here bends beneath the weighty pear,  
And verdant olives flourish round the year.  
The balmy spirit of the western gale  
Eternal breathes on fruits, untaught to fail;  
The same mild season gives the blooms to blow,  
The buds to harden, and the fruit to grow.’

This is Pope’s description of them in the *Odyssey*, which (we must say) is very bad, and if Mr. Williams had not given us a more distinct idea of the places he professes to describe, we should not have gone out of our way to notice them. As works of art, these water-colour drawings deserve very high praise. The drawing is correct and characteristic: the colouring chaste, rich, and peculiar; the finishing generally careful; and the selection of points of view striking and picturesque. We have at once an impressive and satisfactory idea of the country of which we have heard so much; and wish to visit places which, it seems from this representation of them, would not bely all that we have heard. Some splenetic travellers have pretended that Attica was dry, flat, and barren. But it is not so in Mr. Williams’s authentic draughts; and we thank him for restoring to us our old, and, as it appears, true illusion—for crowning that Elysium of our school-boy fancies with majestic hills, and scooping it into lovely winding valleys once more. Lord Byron is, we believe, among those who have spoken ill of Greece, calling it a ‘sand-bank,’ or something of that sort. Every ill-natured traveller ought to hold a pencil as well as a pen in his hand, and be forced to produce a sketch of his own lie. As to the subjects of Mr. Williams’s pencil, nothing can exceed the local interest that belongs to them, and which he has done nothing, either through injudicious selection, or negligent execution, to diminish. Quere. Is not this interest as great in London as it is in Edinburgh? In other words, we mean to ask, whether this exhibition would not answer well in London.

There are a number of other very interesting sketches interspersed,

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and some very pleasing *home* views, which seem to show that nature is everywhere herself.

### FONTHILL ABBEY

*London Magazine.*

*November 1822.*

THE old sarcasm—*Omne ignotum pro magnifico est*—cannot be justly applied here. FONTHILL ABBEY, after being enveloped in impenetrable mystery for a length of years, has been unexpectedly thrown open to the vulgar gaze, and has lost none of its reputation for magnificence—though, perhaps, its visionary glory, its classic renown, have vanished from the public mind for ever. It is, in a word, a desert of magnificence, a glittering waste of laborious idleness, a cathedral turned into a toy-shop, an immense Museum of all that is most curious and costly, and, at the same time, most worthless, in the productions of art and nature. Ships of pearl and seas of amber are scarce a fable here—a nautilus's shell surmounted with a gilt triumph of Neptune—tables of agate, cabinets of ebony and precious stones, painted windows 'shedding a gaudy, crimson light,' satin borders, marble floors, and lamps of solid gold—Chinese pagodas and Persian tapestry—all the miniature splendour of Solomon's Temple is displayed to the view—whatever is far-fetched and dear-bought, rich in the materials, or rare and difficult in the workmanship—but scarce one genuine work of art, one solid proof of taste, one lofty relic of sentiment or imagination!

The difficult, the unattainable, the exclusive, are to be found here in profusion, in perfection; all else is wanting, or is brought in merely as a foil or as a stop-gap. In this respect the collection is as satisfactory as it is *unique*. The specimens exhibited are the best, the most highly finished, the most costly and curious, of that kind of ostentatious magnificence which is calculated to gratify the sense of property in the owner, and to excite the wondering curiosity of the stranger, who is permitted to see or (as a choice privilege and favour) even to touch baubles so dazzling and of such exquisite nicety of execution; and which, if broken or defaced, it would be next to impossible to replace. The same character extends to the pictures, which are mere furniture-pictures, remarkable chiefly for their antiquity or painful finishing, without beauty, without interest, and with about the same pretensions to attract the eye or delight the fancy as a well-polished mahogany table or a waxed oak-floor. Not one great work by one great name, scarce one or two of the worst specimens of the first masters, Leonardo's Laughing Boy, or a copy from Raphael or Correggio, as if to make the thing remote and finical

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—but heaps of the most elaborate pieces of the worst of the Dutch masters, Breughel's Sea-horses with coats of mother-of-pearl, and Rottenhammer's Elements turned into a Flower-piece. The Catalogue, in short, is guiltless of the names of any of those works of art

' Which like a trumpet make the spirits dance ; '

and is sacred to those which rank no higher than veneering, and where the painter is on a precise part with the carver and gilder. Such is not our taste in art ; and we confess we should have been a little disappointed in viewing Fonthill, had not our expectations been disabused beforehand. Oh ! for a glimpse of the Escorial ! where the piles of Titians lie ; where nymphs, fairer than lilies, repose in green, airy, pastoral landscapes, and Cupids with curled locks pluck the wanton vine ; at whose beauty, whose splendour, whose truth and freshness, Mengs could not contain his astonishment, nor Cumberland his raptures ;

' While groves of Eden, vanish'd now so long,  
Live in description, and look green in song ; '

the very thought of which, in that monastic seclusion and low dell, surrounded by craggy precipices, gives the mind a calenture, a longing desire to plunge through wastes and wilds, to visit at the shrine of such beauty, and be buried in the bosom of such verdant sweetness.—Get thee behind us, temptation ; or not all China and Japan will detain us, and this article will be left unfinished, or found (as a volume of Keats's poems was carried out by Mr. Ritchie to be dropped in the Great Desert) in the sorriest inn in the farthest part of Spain, or in the marble baths of the Moorish Alhambra, or amidst the ruins of Tadmor, or in barbaric palaces, where Bruce encountered Abyssinian queens ! Any thing to get all this frippery, and finery, and tinsel, and glitter, and embossing, and system of tantalisation, and fret-work of the imagination out of our heads, and take one deep, long, oblivious draught of the romantic and marvellous, the thirst of which the fame of Fonthill Abbey has raised in us, but not satisfied !—

Mr. Beckford has undoubtedly shown himself an industrious *bijoutier*, a prodigious virtuoso, an accomplished patron of unproductive labour, an enthusiastic collector of expensive trifles—the only proof of taste (to our thinking) he has shown in this collection is *his getting rid of it*. What splendour, what grace, what grandeur might he substitute in lieu of it ! What a handwriting might he spread out upon the walls ! What a spirit of poetry and philosophy might breathe there ! What a solemn gloom, what gay vistas of

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fancy, like chequered light and shade, might genius, guided by art, shed around ! The author of *Vathek* is a scholar ; the proprietor of Fonthill has travelled abroad, and has seen all the finest remains of antiquity and boasted specimens of modern art. Why not lay his hands on some of these ? He had power to carry them away. One might have expected to see, at least, a few fine old pictures, marble copies of the celebrated statues, the Apollo, the Venus, the Dying Gladiator, the Antinous, antique vases with their elegant sculptures, or casts from them, coins, medals, bas-reliefs, something connected with the beautiful forms of external nature, or with what is great in the mind or memorable in the history of man,—Egyptian hieroglyphics, or Chaldee manuscripts, or paper made of the reeds of the Nile, or mummies from the Pyramids ! Not so ; not a trace (or scarcely so) of any of these ;—as little as may be of what is classical or imposing to the imagination from association or well-founded prejudice ; hardly an article of any consequence that does not seem to be labelled to the following effect—‘ *This is mine, and there is no one else in the whole world in whom it can inspire the least interest, or any feeling beyond a momentary surprise !* ’ To show another *your* property is an act in itself ungracious, or null and void. It excites no pleasure from sympathy. Every one must have remarked the difference in his feelings on entering a venerable old cathedral, for instance, and a modern-built private mansion. The one seems to fill the mind and expand the form, while the other only produces a sense of listless vacuity, and disposes us to shrink into our own littleness. Whence is this, but that in the first case our associations of power, of interest, are general, and tend to aggrandise the species ; and that in the latter (*viz.* the case of private property) they are exclusive, and tend to aggrandise none but the individual ? This must be the effect, unless there is something grand or beautiful in the objects themselves that makes us forget the distinction of mere property, as from the noble architecture or great antiquity of a building ; or unless they remind us of common and universal nature, as pictures, statues do, like so many mirrors, reflecting the external landscape, and carrying us out of the magic circle of self-love. But all works of art come under the head of property or showy furniture, which are neither distinguished by sublimity nor beauty, and are estimated only by the labour required to produce what is trifling or worthless, and are consequently nothing more than obtrusive proofs of the wealth of the immediate possessor. The motive for the production of such toys is mercenary, and the admiration of them childish or servile. That which pleases merely from its novelty, or because it was never seen before, cannot be expected to please twice : that which is remarkable

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for the difficulty or costliness of the execution can be interesting to no one but the maker or owner. A shell, however rarely to be met with, however highly wrought or quaintly embellished, can only flatter the sense of curiosity for a moment in a number of persons, or the feeling of vanity for a greater length of time in a single person. There are better things than this (we will be bold to say) in the world both of nature and art—things of universal and lasting interest, things that appeal to the imagination and the affections. The village-bell that rings out its sad or merry tidings to old men and maidens, to children and matrons, goes to the heart, because it is a sound significant of weal or woe to all, and has borne no uninteresting intelligence to you, to me, and to thousands more who have heard it perhaps for centuries. There is a sentiment in it. The face of a Madonna (if equal to the subject) has also a sentiment in it, 'whose price is above rubies.' It is a shrine, a consecrated source of high and pure feeling, a well-head of lovely expression, at which the soul drinks and is refreshed, age after age. The mind converses with the mind, or with that nature which, from long and daily intimacy, has become a sort of second self to it: but what sentiment lies hid in a piece of porcelain? What soul can you look for in a gilded cabinet or a marble slab? Is it possible there can be any thing like a feeling of littleness or jealousy in this proneness to a merely ornamental taste, that, from not sympathising with the higher and more expansive emanations of thought, shrinks from their display with conscious weakness and inferiority? If it were an apprehension of an invidious comparison between the proprietor and the author of any signal work of genius, which the former did not covet, one would think he must be at least equally mortified at sinking to a level in taste and pursuits with the maker of a Dutch toy. Mr. Beckford, however, has always had the credit of the highest taste in works of art as well as in *virtù*. As the showman in Goldsmith's comedy declares that 'his bear dances to none but the genteelest of tunes—*Water parted from the Sea*, or *The Minuet in Ariadne*;'—so it was supposed that this celebrated collector's money went for none but the finest Claudes and the choicest specimens of some rare Italian master. The two Claudes are gone. It is as well—they must have felt a little out of their place here—they are kept in countenance, where they are, by the very best company!

We once happened to have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Beckford in the Great Gallery of the Louvre—he was very plainly dressed in a loose great coat, and looked somewhat pale and thin—but what brought the circumstance to our minds, was that we were told on this occasion one of those thumping matter-of-fact lies, which are pretty common to other Frenchmen besides Gascons—viz. *That he had*

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*offered the First Consul no less a sum than two hundred thousand guineas for the purchase of the St. Peter Martyr.* Would that he had! and that Napoleon had taken him at his word!—which we think not unlikely. With two hundred thousand guineas he might have taken some almost impregnable fortress. ‘Magdeburg,’ said Buonaparte, ‘is worth a hundred queens:’ and he would have thought such another stronghold worth at least one Saint. As it is, what an opportunity have we lost of giving the public an account of this picture! Yet why not describe it, as we see it still ‘in our mind’s eye,’ standing on the floor of the Thuilleries, with none of its brightness impaired, through the long perspective of waning years? There it stands, and will for ever stand in our imagination, with the dark, scowling, terrific face of the murdered monk looking up to his assassin, the horror-struck features of the flying priest, and the skirts of his vest waving in the wind, the shattered branches of the autumnal trees that feel the coming gale, with that cold convent spire rising in the distance amidst the sapphire hills and golden sky—and overhead are seen the cherubim bringing the crown of martyrdom with rosy fingers; and (such is the feeling of truth, the soul of faith in the picture) you hear floating near, in dim harmonies, the pealing anthem, and the heavenly choir! Surely, the St. Peter Martyr surpasses all Titian’s other works, as he himself did all other painters. Had this picture been transferred to the present collection (or any picture like it) what a trail of glory would it have left behind it! for what a length of way would it have haunted the imagination! how often should we have wished to revisit it, and how fondly would the eye have turned back to the stately tower of Fonthill Abbey, that from the western horizon gives the setting sun to other climes, as the beacon and guide to the knowledge and the love of high Art!

The Duke of Wellington, it is said, has declared Fonthill to be ‘the finest thing in Europe.’ If so, it is since the dispersion of the Louvre. It is also said, that the King is to visit it. We do not mean to say it is not a fit place for the King to visit, or for the Duke to praise: but we know this, that it is a very bad one for us to describe. The father of Mr. Christie was supposed to be ‘equally great on a ribbon or a Raphael.’ This is unfortunately not our case. We are not ‘great’ at all, but least of all in little things. We have tried in various ways: we can make nothing of it. Look here—this is the Catalogue. Now what can we say (who are not auctioneers, but critics) to

Six Japan heron-pattern embossed dishes; or,  
Twelve burnt-in dishes in compartments; or,  
Sixteen ditto, enamelled with insects and birds; or,

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Seven embossed soup-plates, with plants and rich borders ; or,  
 Nine chocolate cups and saucers of egg-shell China, blue lotus pattern ; or,  
 Two butter pots on feet, and a bason, cover, and stand, of Japan ; or,  
 Two basons and covers, sea-green mandarin ; or,  
 A very rare specimen of the basket-work Japan, ornamented with flowers in relief, of the finest kind, the inside gilt, from the Ragland Museum ; or,  
 Two fine enamelled dishes scalloped ; or,  
 Two *blue bottles* and two red and gold cups—extra fine ; or,  
 A very curious egg-shell lantern ; or,  
 Two very rare Japan cups mounted as milk buckets, with silver rims, gilt and chased ; or,  
 Two matchless Japan dishes ; or,  
 A very singular tray, the ground of *a curious wood artificially waved*, with storks in various attitudes on the shore, mosaic border, and avanturine back ; or,  
 Two extremely rare bottles with chimæras and plants, mounted in silver gilt ; or,  
 Twenty-four fine OLD SÈVRE dessert plates ; or,  
 Two precious enamelled bowl dishes, with silver handles ;—

Or, to stick to the capital letters in this Paradise of Dainty Devices, lest we should be suspected of singling out the meanest articles, we will just transcribe a few of them, for the satisfaction of the curious reader :—

- A RICH and HIGHLY ORNAMENTED CASKET of the very rare gold JAPAN, completely covered with figures.
- AN ORIENTAL SCULPTURED TASSA OF LAPIS LAZULI, mounted in silver gilt, and set with lapis lazuli intaglios. From the Garde Meuble of the late King of France.
- A PERSIAN JAD VASE and COVER, inlaid with flowers and ornaments, composed of *oriental rubies, and emeralds on stems of fine gold*.
- A LARGE OVAL ENGRAVED ROCK CRYSTAL CUP, with the figure of a Syren, carved from the block, and embracing a part of the vessel with her wings, so as to form a handle ; from the ROYAL COLLECTION OF FRANCE.
- AN OVAL CUP and COVER OF ORIENTAL MAMILLATED AGATE, richly marked in arborescent mocca, elaborately chased and engraved in a very superior manner. *An unique article.*

Shall we go on with this fooling ? We cannot. The reader must be tired of such an uninteresting account of empty jars and caskets—it reads so like Della Cruscan poetry. They are not even *Nugæ Canoræ*. The pictures are much in the same *mimminée-pimminée* taste. For instance, in the first and second days' sale we meet with the following :—

- A high-finished miniature drawing of a Holy Family, and a portrait : one of those with which the patents of the Venetian nobility were usually embellished.
- A small landscape, by Breughel.
- A small miniature painting after Titian, by Stella.

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A curious painting, by Peter Peters Breughel, the conflagration of Troy—a choice specimen of this scarce master.

A picture by Franks, representing the temptation of St. Anthony.

A picture by old Breughel, representing a fête—a singular specimen of his first manner.

Lucas Cranach—The Madonna and Child—highly finished.

A crucifixion, painted upon a gold ground, by Andrea Orcagna, a rare and early specimen of Italian art. From the Campo Santo di Pisa.

A lady's portrait, by Cosway.

Netecher—a lady seated, playing on the harpischord, &c.

Who cares any thing about such frippery, time out of mind the stale ornaments of a pawnbroker's shop; or about old Breughel, or Stella, or Franks, or Lucas Cranach, or Netecher, or Cosway?—But at that last name we pause, and must be excused if we consecrate to him a *petit souvenir* in our best manner: for he was Fancy's child. All other collectors are fools to him: they go about with painful anxiety to find out the realities:—he *said* he had them—and in a moment made them of the breath of his nostrils and the fumes of a lively imagination. His was the crucifix that Abelard prayed to—the original manuscript of the Rape of the Lock—the dagger with which Felton stabbed the Duke of Buckingham—the first finished sketch of the *Jocunda*—Titian's large colossal portrait of Peter Aretine—a mummy of an Egyptian king—an alligator stuffed. Were the articles authentic?—no matter—his faith in them was true. What a fairy palace was his of specimens of art, antiquarianism, and *virtù*, jumbled all together in the richest disorder, dusty, shadowy, obscure, with much left to the imagination (how different from the finical, polished, petty, perfect, modernised air of Fonthill!) and with copies of the old masters, cracked and damaged, which he touched and retouched with his own hand, and yet swore they were the genuine, the pure originals! He was gifted with a *second-sight* in such matters: he believed whatever was incredible. Happy mortal! Fancy bore sway in him, and so vivid were his impressions that they included the reality in them. The agreeable and the true with him were one. He believed in Swedenborgianism—he believed in animal magnetism—he had conversed with more than one person of the Trinity—he could talk with his lady at Mantua through some fine vehicle of sense, as we speak to a servant down stairs through an ear-pipe.—Richard Cosway was not the man to flinch from an *ideal* proposition. Once, at an Academy dinner, when some question was made, whether the story of Lambert's leap was true, he started up, and said it was, for he was the man that performed it;—he once assured us, that the knee-pan of king James I. at Whitehall was nine feet across (he had measured it in concert

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with Mr. Cipriani); he could read in the book of Revelations without spectacles, and foretold the return of Buonaparte from Elba and from St. Helena. His wife, the most lady-like of Englishwomen, being asked, in Paris, what sort of a man her husband was, answered, *Toujours riant, toujours gai*. This was true. He must have been of French extraction. His soul had the life of a bird; and such was the jauntiness of his air and manner that, to see him sit to have his half-boots laced on, you would fancy (with the help of a figure) that, instead of a little withered elderly gentleman, it was Venus attired by the Graces. His miniatures were not fashionable—they were fashion itself. When more than ninety, he retired from his profession, and used to hold up the palsied right hand that had painted lords and ladies for upwards of sixty years, and smiled, with unabated good humour, at the vanity of human wishes. Take him with all his faults or follies, 'we scarce shall look upon his like again!'

After speaking of him, we are ashamed to go back to Fonthill, lest one drop of gall should fall from our pen. No, for the rest of our way, we will dip it in the milk of human kindness, and deliver all with charity. There are four or five very curious cabinets—a triple jewel cabinet of opaque, with panels of transparent amber, dazzles the eye like a temple of the New Jerusalem—the Nautilus's shell, with the triumph of Neptune and Amphitrite, is elegant, and the table on which it stands superb—the cups, vases, and sculptures, by Cellini, Berg, and John of Bologna, are as admirable as they are rare—the Berghem (a sea-port) is a fair specimen of that master—the Poulterer's Shop, by G. Douw, is passable—there are some middling Bassans—the Sibylla Libyca, of L. Caracci, is in the grand style of composition—there is a good copy of a head by Parmegiano—the painted windows in the centre of the Abbey have a surprising effect—the form of the building (which was raised by torch-light) is fantastical, to say the least—and the grounds, which are extensive and fine from situation, are laid out with the hand of a master. A quantity of coot, teal, and wild fowl sport in a crystal stream that winds along the park; and their dark brown coats, seen in the green shadows of the water, have a most picturesque effect. Upon the whole, if we were not much pleased by our excursion to Fonthill, we were very little disappointed; and the place altogether is consistent and characteristic.

## JUDGING OF PICTURES

### JUDGING OF PICTURES

*The Literary Examiner.*

August 2, 1823.

PAINTERS assume that none can judge of pictures but themselves. Many do this avowedly, some by implication, and all in practice. They exclaim against any one writing about art who has not served his apprenticeship to the craft, who is not versed in the detail of its mechanism. 'This has often put me a little out of patience—but I will take patience, and say why.

In the first place, with regard to the productions of living artists, painters have no right to speak at all. The way in which they are devoured and consumed by envy would be ludicrous if it were not lamentable. It is folly to talk of the divisions and backbitings of authors and poets while there are such people as painters in the world. I never in the whole course of my life heard one speak in hearty praise of another. Generally they blame downrightly—but at all events their utmost applause is with a damning reservation. Authors—even poets, the *genus irritabile*—do taste and acknowledge the beauties of the productions of their competitors; but painters either cannot see them through the green spectacles of envy, or seeing, they hate and deny them the more. In conformity with this, painters are more greedy of praise than any other order of men. 'They gorge the little fame they get all raw'—they are gluttonous of it in their own persons in the proportion in which they would starve others.

I once knew a very remarkable instance of this. A friend of mine had written a criticism of an exhibition. In this were mentioned in terms of the highest praise the works of two brothers—sufficiently so, indeed, to have satisfied, one would have thought, the most insatiate. I was going down into the country to the place where these brothers lived, and I was asked to be the bearer of the work in which the critique appeared. I was so, and sent a copy to each of them. Some days afterwards I called on one of them, who began to speak of the review of his pictures. He expressed some thanks for what was said of them, but complained that the writer of it had fallen into a very common error under which he had often suffered—the confounding, namely, his pictures with his brother's. 'Now, my dear sir,' continued he, 'what is said of me is all very well, but here,' turning to the high-wrought panegyric on his brother, 'this is all in allusion to my style—this is all with reference to my pictures—this is all meant for me.' I could hardly help exclaiming before the man's face. The praise which was given to himself was

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such as would have called a blush to any but a painter's face to speak of; but, not content with this, he insisted on appropriating his brother's also: How insatiate is the pictorial man!

But to come to the more general subject—I deny *in toto* and at once the exclusive right and power of painters to judge of pictures. What is a picture meant for? To convey certain ideas to the mind of painters? that is, of one man in ten thousand?—No, but to make them apparent to the eye and mind of all. If a picture be admired by none but painters, I think it is strong presumption that the picture is bad. A painter is no more a judge, I suppose, than another man of how people feel and look under certain passions and events. Every body sees as well as him whether certain figures on the canvas are like such a man, or like a cow, a tree, a bridge, or a windmill. All that the painter can do more than the *lay* spectator, is to tell *why* and *how* the merits and defects of a picture are produced. I see that such a figure is ungraceful and out of nature—he shows me that the drawing is faulty, or the foreshortening incorrect. He then points out to me whence the blemish arises; but he is not a bit more aware of the existence of the blemish than I am. In Hogarth's 'Frontispiece' I see that the whole business is absurd, for a man on a hill two miles off could not light his pipe at a candle held out of a window close to me—he tells me that it is from a want of perspective, that is, of certain rules by which certain effects are obtained. He shows me *why* the picture is bad, but I am just as well capable of saying 'The picture is bad' as he is. To take a coarse illustration, but one most exactly apposite, I can tell whether a made dish be good or bad,—whether its taste be pleasant or disagreeable.—It is dressed for the palate of uninitiated people, and not alone for the disciples of Dr. Kitchener and Mr. Ude. But it needs a cook to tell one *why* it is bad; that there is a grain too much of this, or a drop too much of t'other—that it has been boiled rather too much, or stewed rather too little—these things, the wherefores, as 'Squire Western would say, I require an artist to tell me,—but the point in debate—the worth or the bad quality of the painting or potage, I am as well able to decide upon as any he who ever brandished a pallet or a pan, a brush or a skimming-ladle.

To go into the higher branches of the art—the poetry of painting—I deny still more peremptorily the exclusiveness of the initiated. It might be as well said, that none but those who could write a play have any right to sit on the third row in the pit, on the first night of a new tragedy. Nay, there is more plausibility in the one than the other. No man can judge of poetry without possessing in some measure a poetical mind. It need not be of that degree necessary

## JUDGING OF PICTURES

to create, but it must be equal to taste and to analyse. Now in painting there is a directly mechanical power required to render those imaginations, to the judging of which the mind may be perfectly competent. I may know what is a just or a beautiful representation of love, anger, madness, despair, without being able to draw a straight line—and I do not see how that faculty adds to the capability of so judging. A very great proportion of painting is mechanical. The higher kinds of painting need first a poet's mind to conceive :—Very well, but then they need a draughtsman's hand to execute. Now he who possesses the mind alone is fully able to judge of what is produced, even though he is by no means endowed with the mechanical power of producing it himself. I am far from saying that *any* one is capable of duly judging pictures of the higher class. It requires a mind capable of estimating the noble, or touching, or terrible, or sublime subjects which they present—but there is no sort of necessity that we should be able to put them upon the canvas ourselves.

There is one point, even, on which painters usually judge worse of pictures than the general spectator; I say usually, for there are *some* painters who are too thoroughly intellectual to run into the error of which I am about to speak. I mean that they are apt to overlook the higher and more mental parts of a picture, in their haste to criticise its mechanical properties. They forget the *expression*, in being too mindful of what is more strictly manual. They talk of such a colour being skilfully or unskilfully put in opposition to another, rather than of the moral contrast of the countenances of a group. They say that the flesh-tints are well brought out, before they speak of the face which the flesh forms. To use a French term of much condensation, they think of the *physique* before they bestow any attention on the *morale*.

I am the farthest in the world from falling into the absurdity of upholding that painters should neglect the mechanical parts of their profession; for without a mastery in them it would be impossible to body forth any imaginations, however strong or beautiful. I only wish that they should not overlook the end to which these are the means—and give them an undue preference over that end itself. Still more I object to their arrogating to the possessors of these qualities of hand and eye all power of judging that which is conveyed through the physical vision into the inward soul.

On looking over what I have written, I find that I have used some expressions with regard to painters as a body which may make it appear that I hold them in light esteem; whereas no one can admire their art, or appreciate their pursuit of it, more highly than I do. Of what I have said, however, with regard to their paltry

## ROYAL ACADEMY

denial of each other's merits, I cannot bate them an ace. I appeal to all those who are in the habit of associating with painters to say whether my assertion be not correct. And why should they do this?—surely the field is wide enough. Haydon and Wilkie can travel to fame together without ever jostling each other by the way. Surely there are parallel roads which may be followed, each leading to the same point—but neither crossing or trenching upon one another.

The Art of Painting is one equally delightful to the eye and to the mind. It has very nearly the reality of dramatic exhibition, and has permanence, which that is wholly without. We may gaze at a picture, and pause to think, and turn and gaze again. The art is inferior to poetry in magnitude of extent and succession of detail—but its power over any one point is far superior: it seizes it, and figures it forth in corporeal existence if not in bodily life. It gives to the eye the physical semblance of those figures which have floated in vagueness in the mind. It condenses indistinct and gauzy visions into palpable forms—as, in the story, the morning mist gathered into the embodying a spirit. But shall it be said that the enchanter alone can judge of the enchantment—that none shall have an eye to see, and a heart to feel, unless he have also a hand to execute? Alas, our inherent perceptions give the lie to this. As I used to go to the Louvre, day after day, to glut myself and revel in the congregated genius of pictorial ages, would any one convince me that it was necessary to be able to paint that I might duly appreciate a picture?

## NEW PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

*The Atlas.*

*February 7, 1830.*

THE choice of a President for this Society is one of some nicety. Where there is not any individual taking a decided and indisputable lead in art, it requires a combination and balance of qualities not always easily to be met with. The President of the great body of art in this country ought not merely to be eminent in his profession, but a man of gentlemanly manners, of good person, of respectable character, and standing well in the opinion of his brother artists. He should be a person free from peculiarity of temper, from party spirit, and able to represent the elegant arts (of which he stands at the head) as the last ostensible link connecting scientific pursuit with the enlightened taste and aristocratic refinements of their immediate patrons. The choice has fallen upon Mr. SHEE, and his honours will sit well upon him. This artist has been long a favourite with the public in the most

## ROYAL ACADEMY

popular branch of his art, and is scarcely less distinguished by his occasional brilliant effusions as a poet and his accomplishments as a man. The characteristics of Mr. SHEE's style of portrait painting are vivacity of expression, facility of execution, and clearness of colouring. He has attempted history with some success. Perhaps if he had done more in this way, it might have been to his own detriment; and the habits and studies of the historical painter, immersed in a world of retirement and abstraction, are such as hardly serve for an introduction to situations of ornament and distinction in social life. Mr. WILKIE's merits as a painter of familiar subjects have procured him the deserved honour of being appointed 'historical painter to the King'—the admirable busts of Mr. CHANTREY might also have been thrown into the opposite scale; but, upon the whole, the judgment of the public will not take the laurel from the head where the hands of the Academy have placed it. If we might hint a fault where so much praise is due, it would be by expressing a wish that Mr. SHEE could more boldly say with Rembrandt, '*Je suis peintre, non pas teinturier.*' His tones are too pure, approaching too nearly to virgin tints. For one department of his office the new President is happily qualified—we mean the delivery of lectures from the Chair of the Royal Academy. The art of painting is dumb but Mr. SHEE can borrow the aid of a sister muse.



## DRAMATIC CRITICISM



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## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

### THE STAGE

*The Morning Chronicle.*

February 24, 1814.

THE manner in which Shakespeare's plays have been generally altered, or rather mangled, by modern mechanists, is in our opinion a disgrace to the English Stage. The patch-work Richard which is acted under the sanction of his name, is a striking example of this remark. The play itself is undoubtedly one of the finest effusions of Shakespeare's genius. It is as truly *Shakespearian*—that is, it has as much of the author's mind, of passion, character, and interest, with as little alloy of the peculiarities of the age, or extraneous matter, as almost any other of his productions. Wherever Shakespeare relied upon himself, and did not appeal to the taste of his audience, he outstripped all competition, and this he did as often as he had a motive in his subject to do so; he had none in his vanity, or in the affectation of conforming to certain critical rules. The winds blow as they list; and the golden tide of passion no sooner rises in his breast, than it swells and bears down every thing in its mighty course.

The ground work of the character of Richard,—that mixture of intellectual vigour with moral depravity, in which Shakespeare delighted to shew his strength,—gave full scope as well as temptation to the exertion of his genius. The character of his hero is almost everywhere predominant, and marks its lurid track throughout. The original play is, however, too long for representation, and there are some few scenes which might be better spared than preserved and by omitting which, it would remain a complete whole. The only rule, indeed, for altering Shakespeare, is to retrench certain passages which may be considered either as superfluous or obsolete, but not to add or transpose any thing. The arrangement and developement of the story, and the mutual contrast and combination of the *dramatis personæ*, are in general as finely managed as the developement of the characters or the expression of the passions.

This rule has not been adhered to in the present instance. Some of the most important and striking passages in the principal character

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have been omitted, to make room for tedious and misplaced extracts from other plays; the only intention of which seems to have been, to make the character of Richard as odious and disgusting as possible. A bugbear seems to have been always necessary to the English nation, and—give them but this to vent their spleen upon—they will, either in matters of taste or opinion, ‘as tenderly be led by the nose as asses are.’ It is apparently for no other purpose than to make Gloucester stab King Henry on the stage, that the fine abrupt introduction of this character in the opening of the play is lost in the tedious whining morality of the uxorious King (taken from another play);—we say *tedious*, because it interrupts the business of the scene, and loses its beauty and effect by having no intelligible connection with the previous character of the mild and well-meaning monarch. The passages which Mr. Wroughton has to recite are in themselves exquisitely pathetic, but they have nothing to do with the world that Richard has to ‘bustle in.’ In the same spirit of vulgar caricature is the scene between Richard and Lady Anne (when his wife)—interpolated, merely to gratify this favourite propensity to disgust and loathing. With the same perverse consistency, Richard, after his last fatal struggle, is raised up by some Galvanic process, to utter the imprecation, without any motive but pure malignity, which is so finely put into the mouth of Northumberland on hearing of Percy’s death. We hope that Mr. Kean, when he acts Macbeth, will die as Shakespeare makes him, and not with four lines of canting penitence (a commonplace against ambition) in his mouth. To make room for these needless additions and interpolations, many of the most striking passages in the real play have been omitted by the foppery and ignorance of the prompt-book critics. We do not mean to insist merely on passages which are fine as poetry and to the reader, such as Clarence’s dream, &c. but those which are important to the developement of the character, and peculiarly adapted for stage effect. We give the following as instances among many others.

The first is the scene where Richard enters abruptly to the Queen and her friends, to defend himself :

### *Enter GLOUCESTER.*

‘*Glo.* They do me wrong, and I will not endure it.  
Who are they that complain unto the King,  
That I, forsooth, am stern, and love them not?  
By holy Paul, they love his Grace but lightly,  
That fill his ears with such dissentious rumours;  
Because I cannot flatter, and look fair,  
Smile in men’s faces, smooth, deceive, and cog,  
Duck with French nods and apish courtesy,  
I must be held a rancorous enemy.

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Cannot a plain man live, and think no harm,  
But thus his simple truth must be abused  
With silken, sly, insinuating Jacks?

*Gray.* To whom in all this presence speaks your Grace?

*Glo.* To thee, that hast nor honesty nor grace;  
When have I injured thee? When done thee wrong?  
Or thee? or thee? or any of your faction?  
A plague upon you all!

What can be more characteristic than the turbulent pretensions to meekness and simplicity in this address?

Again, the versatility and adroitness of Richard is admirably described in the following ironical answer to Brakenbury:—

*' Brakenbury.* I beseech your graces both to pardon me,  
His Majesty hath straitly given in charge,  
That no man shall have private conference,  
Of what degree soever, with your brother.

*Glo.* E'en so, and please your worship, Brakenbury,  
You may partake of any thing we say:  
We speak not reason, man—we say the King  
Is wise and virtuous, and his noble Queen  
Well strook in years, fair, and not jealous.  
We say that Shore's wife hath a pretty foot,  
A cherry lip, a passing pleasing tongue:  
That the Queen's kindred are made gentle folks.  
How say you, Sir? Can you deny all this?

*Brak.* With this, my Lord, myself have nought to do.

*Glo.* What, fellow, nought to do with Mistress Shore?  
I tell you, Sir, he that doth nought with her,  
Excepting one, were best to do it secretly alone.

*Brak.* What one, my Lord?

*Glo.* Her husband, knave—wouldst thou betray me?'

The feigned reconciliation of Gloucester with the Queen's kinsmen, is also a master-piece. One of the finest features in the play, and which serves to shew, as much as any thing, the deep duplicity of Richard, is the unsuspecting security of Hastings, at the very time when the former is plotting his death.

Perhaps the two most beautiful passages in the original, are the farewell apostrophe of the Queen to the Tower, where her children are shut up from her, and Tyrrel's description of their death. We will finish our quotations with them:—

*' Queen.* Stay, yet look back with me, unto the Tower;  
Pity, you ancient stones, those tender babes,  
Whom envy hath immured within your walls;  
Rough cradle for such little pretty ones;  
Rude, rugged nurse, old sullen playfellow,  
For tender princes!'

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

The other passage is the account of their death by Tyrrel :—

‘ Dighton and Forrest, whom I did suborn  
To do this piece of ruthless butchery,  
Albeit they were flesh’d villains, bloody dogs,  
Wept like to children in their death’s sad story :  
O thus ! quoth Dighton, lay the gentle babes ;  
Thus, thus ! quoth Forrest, girdling one another,  
Within their innocent alabaster arms ;  
Their lips were four red roses on a stalk,  
And in that summer-beauty kiss’d each other ;  
A book of prayers on their pillow lay,  
Which once, quoth Forrest, almost changed my mind.  
But Oh the Devil !—there the villain stopped :  
When Dighton thus told on—we smothered  
The most replenished sweet work of nature,  
That from the prime creation ere she framed.’

These are those wonderful bursts of feeling, done to the very height of nature which our Shakespeare alone could give. We do not insist on the repetition of these last passages as proper for the stage ; we should indeed be loth to trust them with almost any actor ; but we should wish them to be retained, at least in preference to the fantoccini exhibition of the young Princes, bandying childish wit with their uncle.

We have taken the present opportunity to offer these remarks on the necessity of acting the plays of our great Bard, in spirit and substance, instead of burlesquing them, because we think the stage has acquired in Mr. Kean an actor capable of doing singular justice to many of his finest delineations of character.

### LOVE IN A VILLAGE

*The Morning Chronicle.*

*Covent Garden, December 8, 1813.*

THE Comic Opera of *Love in a Village* was acted last night, in which Miss Stephens made her appearance in Rosetta. She gave the songs in this character with a charm, a truth, and a simplicity, which nothing could surpass. It is difficult to give the preference of praise where there was only a variety of excellence. In some of them we think she displayed greater power and depth of voice than in her other characters. Her manner of acting the part was beautiful ; it was ease and nature itself. The sprightliness and *naïveté* with which she sang the comic songs with Justice Woodcock, had the most fascinating effect. Emery’s Hodge is one of his most perfect characters, and that is bestowing on it the highest praise in our power. Miss S. Booth’s Madge was, we think, very indifferent. The homely dialect of the poor country girl does not accord with the didactic tone of sentimental comedy. Her singing is not tolerable. Miss Matthews made an agreeable Lucinda.

## THE MORNING CHRONICLE

### MR. KEAN'S LUKE

*The Morning Chronicle.*

*Drury Lane, May 26, 1814.*

THE play of *Riches*, or *The Wife and the Brother*, was acted last night for the benefit of Mr. Kean. The house was crowded in every part before the curtain drew up, and even the third tier of boxes was filled with persons of fashion. The play, which is altered from Massinger's *City Madam*, is like most modern alterations, which at once get rid of the beauties and the faults. Some of the fine passages in the original, which are full of imagination and passion, are stripped of all their effect by idle omissions. The play, as far as the part of Luke is concerned, is by no means a Comedy, and, therefore, did not give scope, as might be expected from the title, for the display of any new powers by Mr. Kean. He, however, executed it with his usual ability and success—in a manner very unlike any one else, and very much like nature. Some of his transitions were as striking and as happy as any we recollect in his other performances. In the scene with Sir Maurice Lacy and Lady Traffic, where he is informed of his brother's death, and before he has openly thrown off the mask, he maintained the equivocal tone of the character with admirable skill and effect. It was a masterly delineation of outward professions with mental reservations. In the soliloquy in which Luke describes his reception by the Citizens, after his supposed change of fortune, we thought he *over-mimicked* the part. In describing his exultation at his sudden wealth, and boasting of the causes which led to it,

‘ ——— I owe it all  
To my best friend, DISSIMULATION—— ’

nothing could be more happy than the distinct, deliberate, internal articulation which Mr. Kean gave to the last word. Through the whole of the scene where Sir Maurice remonstrates with him on the injustice of his conduct, he maintained his superiority with great spirit and firmness; and when asked, ‘Hast thou no pity for their sufferings?’ he gave the answer, ‘No! *they’d none for mine*,’ in that blended tone of energy and pathos, which we wish Mr. Kean oftener to assume, because we think he always succeeds where he attempts it. In the concluding scene, in which his brother, whom he thought dead, appears before him, Mr. Kean even surpassed his usual excellence. The shame and agony displayed in the manner in which he holds by the back of the chair, to which he has staggered, with his hands before his face, shrinking up into himself, and the abject posture in which he crawls, like a spider, to cling to his brother's feet, had a truth, an originality, and an impressiveness of effect, equal to any thing we have

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

witnessed in this extraordinary actor. There was great dignity in the manner in which he resumes his real character, after his humiliating offers have been rejected, but in delivering the curse, his voice became hoarse and inefficient.

### MISS O'NEILL

*The Champion.*

*Covent Garden, November 6, 1814.*

MISS O'NEILL in *Belvidera* and in *Isabella*, which she played on Friday night, gains upon the public opinion. In both these characters she has surpassed the expectations we had formed from her *Juliet*, and has, we conceive, fully established her reputation. It is not easy to convey an idea of an actress who has no peculiar defects, and whose excellence is nearly uniform. She is by far the most impressive tragic actress we have seen since Mrs. Siddons; nor do we think that the expression of domestic and feminine distress can well be carried farther. As she has been compared (and with some appearance of reason) to Mrs. Siddons, we shall attempt to describe the difference between them. This is scarcely greater in the form, features, and tone of voice, than in the expression of the internal workings of the mind. In Mrs. Siddons, passion was combined with lofty imagination and commanding intellect. Miss O'Neill owes everything to extreme sensibility. In her *Belvidera* and *Isabella*, you see the natural feelings of tenderness and grief, worked up to madness by accumulated misfortune. She gives herself up entirely to the impression of circumstances, is borne along the tide of passion, and absorbed in her sufferings. She realizes all that is suggested by the progress of the story, and answers the utmost expectation of the spectator, but she seldom goes beyond it. She does not lift the imagination out of itself. Every nerve is strained, her frame is convulsed, her breath suspended, her forehead knit together, fate encloses her round, and seizes on his struggling victim. Nothing can be more natural or more affecting than her noble conception of the part. But still there is not that terrible reaction of mental power on the scene, which forms the perfection of tragedy, whether in acting or writing. It was those reaches of the soul, in which it looks down on its sufferings, in which it rises superior to nature and fortune, and gathers strength and grandeur from its despair, that gave such majesty and power to Mrs. Siddons' acting. She seemed formed for scenes of terror and agony, and fit to contend with them, and then only to possess the full plenitude and expansion of her being. Her acting left a weight upon the mind, and overpowered the faculties, as sleep oppresses infants. For characters and situations of pure

## THE CHAMPION

natural interest we can conceive no one better qualified than Miss O'Neill, and while she is equal to filling the highest parts, she may descend to others, which Mrs. Siddons could not certainly have played with advantage.

We have already spoken of Miss Foote in the character of Amanthis. Her acting in the *Forest of Bondy* is equally delightful. We have seldom seen anything more graceful, or full of gay and innocent *naïveté*, than her coquetry with Florio about the kiss in the first scene. She has in this piece another lover of singular attractions, which she was insensible enough to withstand. This was no other than Mr. Liston, the Orlando of ostlers, and Romeo of amorous rustics. Whether incited by the loveliness of the fair object of his sighs, he adorned his person with more than usual airs and graces. He wore a loose flowing flaxen wig on the occasion, which fell over his shoulders, and as he moved with graceful ease backwards and forwards, the golden locks waved up and down, as Homer has described Apollo's. Surrounded with his ornamental addition, his face looked as round as an apple, and his eyes glistened with pleasure. There is an oily richness of expression which trickles down this gentleman's face, and makes it shine all over with gladness. His nose looks just as if it were tickled with a tythe-pig's tail, and his chin makes a comfortable cushion for a jest. His voice is rich with 'very excellent conceit,' he sings with good emphasis and discretion, and dances (what no one perhaps ever did before) like a man of genius. The difference between Mr. Liston and some other popular actors, that we could name, is that they make all sorts of grimaces, and strain every feature to make you laugh: whereas he seems bursting with some excellent joke, which he cannot keep to himself for the life of him. It has been objected with some truth that he is rather a humourist than an actor: if he is not a copy of any one but himself, he is at least an exquisite original and wonderfully great in the character of Liston!

Miss Stephens played Rosina at this Theatre on Tuesday, and charmed her audience. She sings more sweetly and with more power than ever. We leave the air of 'Sweet Bird' to the learned critic, but we have never been more delighted than with her singing 'While with Village Maids I Stray.' She added new graces to the tune, always simple, and always elegant: and the continued flow of melodious sound

' . . . in many a winding bout  
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,'

resembled the murmuring of waters flowing in circling eddies. Mr. Duruset improves greatly in his singing, and might improve still more in his acting. Miss Matthews minces her words as prettily, and trips across the stage as archly as ever.

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### MR. KEMBLE'S PENRUDDOCK

*The Champion.*

*Covent Garden, November 20, 1814.*

MR. KEMBLE lately appeared at this theatre in the character of Penruddock, and was received (not indeed with waving handkerchiefs, and laurel garlands thrown on the stage, but what is much better) with heartfelt approbation and silent tears. His delineation of the part is one of his most correct and interesting performances, and one of the most perfect on the modern stage. The deeply rooted, mild, pensive melancholy of the character, its embittered recollections and dignified benevolence, were given by Mr. Kemble with equal truth, elegance, and feeling. This admirable actor appeared to be the unfortunate, but amiable individual whom he represented; and the expression of the sentiments, the look, the tone of voice, exactly true to nature, struck a correspondent chord in every bosom.—The range of characters, in which Mr. Kemble shines, and is superior to every other actor, are those which consist in the development of some one sentiment or exclusive passion. From a want of rapidity, of scope, and variety, he is often deficient in expressing the bustle and complication of different interests, nor does he possess the faculty of overpowering the mind by sudden and irresistible bursts of passion. But in giving the habitual workings of a predominant feeling, as in Penruddock, Coriolanus, and some others, where all the passions move round a central point, and have one master key, he stands unrivalled. In Penruddock, he broods over the recollection of disappointed hope, till it becomes a part of himself, it sinks deeper into his mind the longer he dwells upon it, and his whole person is moulded to the character. The weight of sentiment which oppresses him never seems suspended, the spring at his heart is never lightened, his regrets only become more profound as they become more durable. So in Coriolanus, he exhibits the ruling passion with the same continued firmness, he preserves the same haughty dignity of demeanour, the same energy of will, and unbending sternness of temper throughout. He is swayed by a single impulse. His tenaciousness of purpose is only irritated by opposition: he turns neither to the right nor to the left: but the vehemence with which he moves forward increases every instant, till it hurries him to the catastrophe. In Leontes, in the Winter's Tale, the growing jealousy of the king, and the exclusive possession which it at length obtains of his mind, are marked in the finest manner, particularly where he exclaims—

' Is whispering nothing ?

Is leaning cheek to cheek ? is meeting noses ?

Kissing with inside lip ? stopping the career

## THE CHAMPION

Of laughter with a sigh, a note infallible  
Of breaking honesty? horsing foot on foot?  
Skulking in corners? wishing clocks more swift?  
Hours minutes? the noon, midnight? and all eyes  
Blind with the pin and web, but theirs; theirs only  
That would unseen be wicked? Is this nothing?  
Why then the world and all that 's in't is nothing.  
The covering sky is nothing, Bohemia nothing,  
My wife is nothing, if this be nothing.'

In the course of this enumeration every proof tells harder, his conviction becomes more rivetted at every step of his progress, and at the end his mind is wound up to a frenzy of despair. In such characters, Mr. Kemble has no occasion to call in the resources of invention, or the tricks of the art; his excellence consists entirely in the increasing intensity with which he dwells on a given feeling or enforces a predominant passion. In Hamlet, on the contrary, Mr. Kemble unavoidably fails from a want of flexibility, or of that quick sensibility, which yields to every motive, and is borne away with every breath of fancy, which is distracted by the multiplicity of its reflections, and lost in its own purposes. There is a perpetual undulation of feeling in the character of Hamlet (though it must be confessed, much of this, which is the essence of the play, is left out on the stage), but in Mr. Kemble's acting 'there is no variableness nor shadow of turning.' He plays it like a man in armour, with a determined inveteracy of purpose, in one undeviating strait line, which is as remote from the natural grace and easy susceptibility of the character, as the sharp angles and abrupt starts to produce an effect, which Mr. Kean introduces into it. Mr. Kean's Hamlet is, in our opinion, as much too 'splenetic and rash,' as Mr. Kemble's is too deliberate and formal. In Richard, Mr. Kemble has not that tempest and whirlwind of the passions, that life and spirit, and dazzling rapidity of motion, which, as it were, fills the stage, and burns in every part, which Mr. Kean displayed in it till he was worn out by the managers. Mr. Kean's acting, in general, strongly reminds us of the lines of the poet, when he describes

'The fiery soul that working out its way  
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,  
And o'erinformed the tenement of clay.'

Mr. Kemble's manner on the contrary has always something dry, hard and pedantic in it. 'You shall relish him more in the scholar than the soldier.' But his monotony does not fatigue, his formality does not displease, because there is always sense and feeling in what he does. The fineness of Mr. Kemble's figure has perhaps led to that statue-like appearance which his acting is sometimes too apt to

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

assume; as the diminutiveness of Mr. Kean's person has probably forced him to bustle about too much, and to attempt to make up for the want of dignity of form by the violence and contrast of his attitudes. If Mr. Kemble were to remain in the same posture for half an hour, his figure would only produce admiration—if Mr. Kean were to stand still only for a moment, the contrary effect would be produced.

To return to Penruddock and the Wheel of Fortune. The only novelties were Miss Foote in Emily Tempest, and her lover, Mr. Farley, as Sir David Daw. The latter, who is a Welch Adonis of five and twenty, from the natural advantages of his person, and the artificial improvements which were added to it, was a very admirable likeness, on a reduced scale, of the Prince Regent. We do not know whether the burlesque was intended, but it had a laughable effect. We acknowledge that Mr. Farley is one of those persons whom we always welcome heartily when we see him. What with laughing at him and laughing with him, we hardly know a more comic personage. Miss Foote played and looked the part of Emily Tempest very naturally and very prettily, but without giving to the character either much interest or much elegance. Her voice is in itself as sweet as her person, and when she exerts it, she articulates with ease and clearness: but we should add, that she has a habit of tripping in her common speaking, that is, of dropping her voice so low, except where a particular emphasis is to be laid, as to make it difficult for the ear to follow the sense.

### MR. KEAN'S IAGO

*The Examiner.*

*September 11, 1814.*

MR. EXAMINER,—I was not at all aware that in the remarks which I offered on Mr. Kean's Iago my opinions would clash with those already expressed by the respectable writer of the *Theatrical Examiner*: for I did not mean to object to 'the gay and careless air which Mr. Kean threw over his representation of that arch villain,' but to its being nothing but carelessness and gaiety; and I thought it perfectly consistent with a high degree of admiration of this extraordinary actor, to suppose that he might have carried an ingenious and original idea of the character to a paradoxical extreme. In some respects, your Correspondent seems to have mistaken what I have said; for he observes that I have entered into an analysis to shew, 'that Iago is a malignant being, who hates his fellow-creatures, and doats on mischief and crime as the best means of annoying the objects of his hate.' Now this is the very reverse of what I intended to shew; for so far from thinking

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that Iago is 'a ruffian or a savage, who pursues wickedness for its own sake,' I am ready to allow that he is a pleasant amusing sort of gentleman, but with an over-activity of mind that is dangerous to himself and others; that so far from hating his fellow-creatures, he is perfectly regardless of them, except as they may afford him food for the exercise of his spleen, and that 'he doats on mischief and crime,' not 'as the best means of annoying the objects of his hate,' but as necessary to keep himself in that strong state of excitement which his natural constitution requires, or, to express it proverbially, in *perpetual hot water*. Iago is a man who will not suffer himself or any one else to be at rest; he has an insatiable craving after action, and action of the most violent kind. His conduct and motives require some explanation; but they cannot be accounted for from his interest or his passions,—his love of himself, or hatred of those who are the objects of his persecution: these are both of them only the occasional pretext for his cruelty, and are in fact both of them subservient to his love of power and mischievous irritability. I repeat, that I consider this sort of unprincipled self-will as a very different thing from common malignity; but I conceive it also just as remote from indifference or levity. In one word, the malice of Iago is not *personal*, but *intellectual*. Mr. Kean very properly got rid of the brutal ferocity which had been considered as the principle of the character, and then left it without any principle at all. He has mistaken the want of moral feeling, which is inseparable from the part, for constitutional ease and general indifference, which are just as incompatible with it. Mr. Kean's idea seems to have been, that the most perfect callousness ought to accompany the utmost degree of inhumanity; and so far as relates to callousness to moral considerations, this is true; but that is not the question. If our Ancient had no other object or principle of action but his indifference to the feelings of others, he gives himself a great deal of trouble to no purpose. If he has nothing else to set him in motion, he had much better remain quiet than be broken on the rack. Mere carelessness and gaiety, then, do not account for the character. But Mr. Kean acted it with nearly the same easy air with which Mr. Braham sings a song in an opera, or with which a comic actor delivers a side-speech in an after-piece.

But the character of Iago, says your Correspondent, has nothing to do with the manner of acting it. We are to look to the business of the play. Is this then so very pleasant, or is the part which Iago undertakes and executes the perfection of easy comedy? I should conceive quite the contrary. The rest of what your Correspondent says on this subject is 'ingenious, but not convincing.' It amounts to this, that Iago is a hypocrite, and that a hypocrite should always be gay. This must depend upon circumstances. *Tartuffe* was a

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hypocrite, yet he was not gay : Joseph Surface was a hypocrite, but grave and plausible : Blifil was a hypocrite, but cold, formal and reserved. The hypocrite is naturally grave, that is, thoughtful, and dissatisfied with things as they are, plotting doubtful schemes for his own advancement and the ruin of others, studying far-fetched evasions, double-minded and double-faced.—Now all this is an effort, and one that is often attended with disagreeable consequences ; and it seems more in character that a man whose invention is thus kept on the rack, and his feelings under painful restraint, should rather strive to hide the wrinkle rising on his brow, and the malice at his heart, under an honest concern for his friend, or the serene and regulated smile of steady virtue, than that he should wear the light-hearted look and easy gaiety of thoughtless constitutional good humour. The presumption therefore is not in favour of the lively, laughing, comic mien of hypocrisy. Gravity is its most obvious resource, and, with submission, it is quite as effectual a one. But it seems, that if Iago had worn this tremendous mask, ‘ the gay and idle world would have had nothing to do with him.’ Why, indeed, if he had only intended to figure at a carnival or a ridotto, to dance with the women or drink with the men, this objection might be very true. But Iago has a different scene to act in, and has other thoughts in his contemplation. One would suppose that Othello contained no other adventures than those which are to be met with in Anstey’s Bath Guide, or in one of Miss Burney’s novels. The smooth smiling surface of the world of fashion is not the element he delights to move in : he is the busy meddling fiend ‘ who rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm,’ triumphing over the scattered wrecks, and listening to the shrieks of death. I cannot help thinking that Mr. Kean’s Iago must be wrong, for it seems to have abstracted your Correspondent entirely from the subject of the play. Indeed it is one great proof of Mr. Kean’s powers, but which at the same time blinds the audience to his defects, that they think of little else in any play but of the part he acts. ‘ What ! a gallant Venetian turned into a musty philosopher ! Go away, and beg the reversion of Diogenes’ tub ! Go away, the coxcomb Roderigo will think you mighty dull, and will answer your requests for money with a yawn ; the cheerful spirited Cassio will choose some pleasanter companion to sing with him over his cups ; the fiery Othello will fear lest his philosophic Ancient will be less valorously incautious in the day of battle, and that he will not storm a fort with the usual uncalculating intrepidity.’ Now, the coxcomb Roderigo would probably have answered his demands for money with a yawn, though he had been ever so facetious a companion, if he had not thought him useful to his affairs. He employs him as a man of business, as a dextrous, cunning,

## THE EXAMINER

plotting rogue, who is to betray his master and debauch his wife, an occupation for which his good humour or apparent want of thought would not particularly qualify him. An accomplice in knavery ought always to be a solemn rogue, and withal a casuist, for he thus becomes our better conscience, and gives a sanction to the roguery. Cassio does not invite Iago to drink with him, but is prevailed upon against his will to join him; and Othello himself owes his misfortunes, in the first instance, to his having repulsed the applications of Iago to be made his lieutenant. He himself affects to be blunt and unmannerly in his conversation with Desdemona. There is no appearance of any cordiality towards him in Othello, nor of his having been a general favourite (for such persons are not usually liked), nor of his having ever been employed but for his understanding and discretion. He every where owes his success to his intellectual superiority, and not to the pleasantness of his manners. At no time does Othello put implicit confidence in Iago's personal character, but demands his proofs; or when he founds his faith on his integrity, it is from the gravity of his manner: 'Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more,' &c.

Your Correspondent appeals to the manners of women of the town, to prove that 'there is a fascination in an open manner.' I do not see what this has to do with Iago. Those who promise to give only pleasure, do not of course put on a melancholy face, or ape the tragic muse. The Sirens would not lull their victims by the prophetic menaces of the Furies. Iago did not profess to be the harbinger of welcome news. The reference to Milton's Satan and Lovelace is equally misplaced. If Iago had himself endeavoured to seduce Desdemona, the cases would have been parallel. Lovelace had to seduce a virtuous woman to pleasure, by presenting images of pleasure, by fascinating her senses, and by keeping out of sight every appearance of danger or disaster. Iago, on the contrary, shews to Othello that he has 'a monster in his thought'; and it is his object to make him believe this by dumb show, by the knitting of his brows, by stops and starts, &c. before he is willing to commit himself by words. Milton's devil also could only succeed by raising up the most voluptuous and delightful expectations in the mind of Eve, and by himself presenting an example of the divine effects produced by eating of the tree of knowledge. Gloom and gravity were here out of the question. Yet how does Milton describe the behaviour of this arch-hypocrite, when he is about to complete his purpose?

'She scarce had said, though brief, when now more bold  
The Tempter, but with shew of zeal and love  
To man and indignation at his wrong,  
New part puts on, and as to passion moved,

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Fluctuates disturb'd yet comely and in act  
Rais'd, as of some great matter to begin,  
As when of old some orator renown'd  
In Athens or free Rome, where eloquence  
Flourish'd, since mute, to some great cause address'd,  
Stood in himself collected, while each part,  
Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue;  
Sometimes in height began, as no delay  
Of preface brooking through his zeal of right;  
So standing, moving, or to height upgrown,  
The Tempter all-impassion'd thus began : '

If this impassioned manner was justifiable here, where the serpent had only to persuade Eve to her imagined good, how much more was it proper in Iago, who had to tempt Othello to his damnation? When he hints to Othello that his wife is unfaithful to him—when he tells his proofs, at which Othello swoons, when he advises him to strangle her, and undertakes to dispatch Cassio from his zeal in 'wronged Othello's service,' should he do this with a smiling face, or a face of indifference? If a man drinks or sings with me, he may perhaps drink or sing much as Mr. Kean drinks or sings with Roderigo and Cassio: if he bids me good day, or wishes me a pleasant journey, a frank and careless manner will well become him; but if he assures me that I am on the edge of a precipice, or waylaid by assassins, or that some tremendous evil has befallen me, with the same fascinating gaiety of countenance and manner, I shall be little disposed to credit either his sincerity or friendship or common sense.

Your Correspondent accounts for the security and hilarity of Iago, in such circumstances, from his sense of superiority and his certainty of success. First, this is not the account given in the text, which I should prefer to any other authority on the subject. Secondly, if he was quite certain of the success of his experiment, it was not worth the making, for the only provocation to it was the danger and difficulty of the enterprise; and at any rate, whatever were his feelings, the appearance of anxiety and earnestness was necessary to the accomplishment of his purpose. 'He should assume a virtue, if he had it not.' Besides, the success of his experiment was not of that kind even which has been called *negative* success, but proved of a very tragical complexion both to himself and others. I can recollect nothing more to add, without repeating what I have before said, which I am afraid would be to no purpose. I am, Sir, your obedient servant, W. H.

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### KEAN'S BAJAZET AND THE COUNTRY GIRL

*The Examiner.*

November 12, 1815.

THE lovers of the drama have had a very rich theatrical treat this week, Mr. Kean's first appearance in Bajazet, two new Miss Peggys in the Country Girl, and last, though not least, Miss Stephens's re-appearance in Polly. Of Mr. Kean's Bajazet we have not much to say, without repeating what we have said before. The character itself is merely calculated for the display of physical passion and external energy. It is violent, fierce, turbulent, noisy, and blasphemous, 'full of sound and fury, signifying nothing,' Mr. Kean did justice to his author, or went the whole length of the text. A viper does not dart with more fierceness and rapidity on the person who has just trod upon it than he turns upon Tamerlane in the height of his fury. An unslaked thirst of vengeance and blood has taken possession of every faculty, like the savage rage of a hyaena, assailed by the hunters. His eyeballs glare, his teeth gnash together, his hands are clenched. In describing his defeat, his voice is choked with passion; he curses, and the blood curdles in his veins. Never was the fiery soul of barbarous revenge, stung to madness by repeated shame and disappointment, so completely displayed. This truth of nature and passion in Mr. Kean's acting carries every thing before it. He was the only person on the stage who seemed alive. The mighty Tamerlane appeared no better than a stuffed figure dressed in ermine, Arpasia moaned in vain, and Moneses roared out his wrongs unregarded, like the hoarse sounds of distant thunder. Nothing can withstand the real tide of passion once let loose; and yet it is pretended, that the great art of the tragic actor is in damming it up, or cutting out smooth canals and circular basons for it to flow into, so that it may do no harm in its course. It is the giving way to natural and strong impulses of the imagination that floats Mr. Kean down the stream of public favour with all its faults—'a load to sink a navy.' The only wonder was to see this furious character suffered to go about and take the whole range of the palace of Tamerlane, without the least let or impediment. It shewed a degree of magnanimity in Mr. Pope, which is without any parallel, even in modern times. It is understood that the play was originally written by the whig poet Rowe, and regularly acted on the anniversary of our whig revolution, as a compliment to King William, and a satire on Louis XIV. For any thing we know, the resemblance of Tamerlane to King William may be sufficiently strong, there the historian and the poet may agree tolerably well; but what traits the Tartar Chieftain and the French Monarch had in common, it would be difficult to find out. If any

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more recent allusion was intended in its revival, it fell still wider of the mark. The play of Tamerlane may be divided into two heads—cant and rant. Tamerlane takes the first part, and Bajazet the second. This last hurls defiance at both gods and men. He is utterly regardless of consequences, and rushes upon his destruction like a wild beast into the toils. He utters but one striking sentiment, when he defends ambition as the hunger of noble minds. Bajazet's character is energy without greatness. He is blind to every thing but the present moment, and insensible to every thing but the present impulse. True greatness is the reverse of this. It shews all the energy of courage, but none of the impatience of despair. It struggles with difficulty, but yields to necessity. It does every thing, and suffers nothing. It sees events with the eye of history, and makes Time the Judge of Fortune. Courage with calmness constitutes the perfection of the heroic character, as the effeminate and sentimental unite the extremes of activity and irritability. We never saw Mr. Kean look better. His costume and his colour had a very picturesque effect. The yellow brown tinge of the Tartar becomes him much better than the tawny brick-dust complexion of the Moor in Othello.

Now for our two Country Girls. We have seen both without any great effort of our patience: to confess a truth, we had rather see the Country Girl two nights running than Tamerlane; as we would rather have been Wycherley than Rowe. The comedy of the Country Girl is taken from Molière's School for Wives. It is however a perfectly free imitation, or rather an original work, founded on the same general plot, with additional characters, and in a style wholly different. Scarcely a line is the same. The long, speechifying dialogues in the French comedy are cut down into a succession of smart conversations and lively scenes: there is indeed a certain pastoral sweetness or sentimental *naïveté* in the character of Agnes, which is lost in Miss Peggy, who is however the more natural and mischievous little rustic of the two. The incident of her running up against her guardian as she is running off with her gallant in the park, and the contrivance of the second letter which she imposes on her jealous fool as Alithea's, are Wycherley's. The characters of Alithea, Harcourt, and of the fop Sparkish, who appears to us so exquisite, and to others so insipid, are additional portraits from the reign and court of Charles II. Those who object to the scenes between this gentleman and his mistress as unnatural, can never have read the Memoirs of the Count de Grammont,—an authentic piece of English history, in which we trace the origin of so many noble families. What an age of wit and folly, of coxcombs and coquets, when the world of fashion led purely ornamental lives, and their only object was to make themselves or others

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ridiculous. Happy age, when the utmost stretch of a morning's study went no further than the choice of a sword knot, or the adjustment of a side curl; when the soul spoke out in all the persuasive eloquence of dress; when beaux and belles, enamoured of themselves in one another's follies, fluttered like gilded butterflies in giddy mazes through the walks of St. James's Park! The perfection of this gala out-of-door comedy is in Etherege, the gay Sir George! Then comes Wycherley, and then Congreve, who hands them into the drawing-room. Congreve is supposed to have been the inventor of the epigrammatic, clenched style of comic dialogue; but there is a great deal of this both in Wycherley and Etherege, with more of a *janty* tone of flippant gaiety in the latter, and more incident, character, and situation in the former. The Country Girl holds unimpaired possession of the stage to this day, by its wit, vivacity, nature, and ingenuity. Nothing can be worse acted, and yet it goes down, for it supplies the imagination with all that the actors want. Mr. Bartley had some merit as Moody, Mr. Fawcett none. Barrymore, at Covent Garden played Harcourt well. We have seen him in better company, and he reminded us of it. He was much of the gentleman, and as much at home on the stage (from long practice) as if he had been in his own apartments. As to the two Miss Peggys, we hardly know how to settle their pretensions. If Mrs. Mardyn overacts her part to that degree that she seems only to want a skipping-rope to make it complete, Mrs. Alsop is so stiff and queer that she seems to have only just escaped from a back-board and steel monitor. If Mrs. Alsop has the clearest voice, Mrs. Mardyn has the brightest eyes. Mrs. Alsop has most art, Mrs. Mardyn has most nature. If Mrs. Mardyn is too profuse of natural graces, too young and buoyant and exuberant in all her movements, the same fault cannot be found with Mrs. Alsop, whose smiles give no pleasure, and whose frowns give unmingled pain. Mrs. Alsop's Peggy is a clever recitation of the character, without being the thing; and Mrs. Mardyn's is a very full development of her own person, which is the thing itself. Mrs. Alsop is the best actress, though not worth a pin, and Mrs. Mardyn is the most desirable woman, which is always worth something. We may apply to these two ladies what Suckling said of one of his mistresses—

'I take her body, you her mind,—  
Which has the better bargain.'

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

### MR. GRIMALDI

*The Examiner.*

*December 31, 1815.*

BOTH Pantomimes are indifferent. That at Drury-Lane consists in endless flights of magpies up to the ceiling, and that at Covent-Garden stays too long in China. The latter part was better where Mr. Grimaldi comes in, and lets off a culverin at his enemies, and sings a serenade to his mistress in concert with Grimalkin. We were glad, right glad, to see Mr. Grimaldi again. There was (some weeks back) an ugly report that Mr. Grimaldi was dead. We would not believe it; we did not like to ask any one the question, but we watched the public countenance for the intimation of an event which 'would have eclipsed the gaiety of nations.' We looked at the faces we met in the street, but there were no signs of general sadness; no one stopped his acquaintance to say, that a man of genius was no more. Here indeed he is again, safe and sound, and as pleasant as ever. As without the gentleman at St. Helena, there is an end of politics in Europe; so without the clown at Sadler's Wells, there must be an end of pantomimes in this country!

### THE FAIR DESERTER

*The Examiner.*

*Haymarket Theatre, September 1, 1816.*

THE new farce in one act, called *The Fair Deserter*, succeeds very well here. It preserves the unities of time, place, and action, with the most perfect regularity. The merit of it is confined to the plot, and to the pretended changes of character by the changes of dress, which succeed one another with the rapidity and with something of the ingenuity of a pantomime. Mr. Duruset, a young officer of musical habits, wishes to release Miss MacAlpine from the power of her guardian, who is determined to marry her the next day. The young lady is kept under lock and key, and the difficulty is to get her out of the house. For this purpose Tokely, servant to Duruset, contrives to make the cook of the family drunk at an alehouse, where he leaves him, and carries off his official paraphernalia, his night-cap, apron, and long knife, in a bundle to his master. The old guardian (Watkinson) comes out with his lawyer from the house, and Tokely, presenting himself as the drunken cook, is let in. He, however, takes the key of the street door with him, which he shuts to, and as this intercepts the return of the old gentleman to his house, Tokely is forced to get out of the window by a ladder to fetch a blacksmith. He presently returns himself, in the character of the blacksmith, unlocks the door, but on the other's refusing him a guinea for his trouble, locks it again, and

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walks off in spite of all remonstrances. The guardian is now compelled to ascend the ladder himself as well as he can : and while he is engaged in this ticklish adventure, the young Gallant and his mischievous Valet return with a couple of sentries whom Duruset orders to seize the poor old Guardian as a robber, and upon his declaring who and what he is, he is immediately charged by the lover with concealing a Deserter in his house, who is presently brought out, and is in fact his ward, disguised in a young officer's uniform, which Tokely had given to her for that purpose. Tokely now returns dressed as an officer, and pretending to be the father of the young gentleman, with much blustering and little probability, persuades the guardian to consent to the match between his (adopted) son and the young lady, who has just been arrested as the Deserter, and who, upon this, throwing aside her disguise, the affair is concluded, to the satisfaction of every body but the old guardian, and the curtain drops. The bustle of this little piece keeps it alive : there is nothing good either in the writing or the acting of it.

## THE MISS DENNETTS

*The Examiner.*

*Covent Garden, October 27, 1816.*

AFTER the play, we saw the Broken Sword, which is a melodrame of some interest, for it has a dumb boy, a murderer, and an innocent person suspected of being the perpetrator of the crime, in it : but it is a very ill-digested and ill-conducted piece. The introduction to the principal events is very tedious and round about, and the incidents themselves, when they arrive, come in very great disorder, and shock from their improbability and want of necessary connection as much as from their own nature. Mr. Terry played the part of a murderer with considerable gravity. We do not know at all how he came to get into so awkward a situation. The piece is, we understand, from common report, by Mr. Dimond. It is by no means one of his best. For he is a very impressive as well as a prolific writer in this way, and would do still better, if he would mind his fine writing less, and get on faster to the business of the story. Mr. Farley was highly interesting as Estevan, the servant who is unjustly accused of the murder of his master ; in fact, he always plays this class of characters admirably, both as to feeling and effect ; and Miss Lupino played the dumb Florio very prettily. In the first act, there was a dance by the Miss Dennetts. If our readers have not seen this dance, we hope they will, and that they will *encore* it, which is the etiquette. Certainly, it is the prettiest thing in the world, except the performers in it. They are quite charming. They are three kindred Graces cast in the same

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

mould : a little Trinity of innocent delights, dancing in their ' trinal simplicities below.' They are like ' three red roses on a stalk ' ; and in the *pas de trois* which they dance twice over, they are as it were twined and woven into garlands and festoons of blushing flowers, such as ' Proserpine let fall from Dis's waggon.' You can hardly distinguish them from one another, they are at first so alike in shape, age, air, look : so that the pleasure you receive from one is blended with the delight you receive from the other two, in a sort of provoking, pleasing confusion. Milton was thinking of them when he wrote the lines :—

' Whom lovely Venus at a birth,  
With two Sister Graces more,  
To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore.'

Yet after all we have a preference, but we will not say which it is, whether the tallest or the shortest, the fairest or the darkest, of this lovely, laughing trio, more gay and joyous than Mozart's.—' But pray, dear sir, could you not give us a little bit of a hint which of us it is you like the very, very best ? '—Yes, yes, you rogue, you know very well it's you, but don't say a word of it to either of your sisters.

### TWO NEW FARCES

*The Examiner.*

December 15, 1816.

THERE have been two new farces this week : one at each house. One was saved and one was damned. One was justly damned, and the other unjustly saved. *Nota Bene*, or *The Two Dr. Fungus's*, shot up and disappeared in one night, notwithstanding the inimitable acting and well-oiled humour of Oxberry in one scene, where he makes bumpkin forward love to Mrs. Orger in a style equal to Liston. *Love and Toothache*, though there is neither *Love* nor *Toothache* in it, is as disagreeable as the one and as foolish as the other. One farce consists of a succession of low incidents without a plot, and the other is one tedious and improbable incident without a plot. The changing of the two signs, or *Nota Benes*, of the two *Fungus's*, barber and doctor, in the first, is better than anything in the last. The only difference is, that at the one house they contrive to have their pieces cast, and get them condemned at the other. Yet this is a saying without any meaning ; for in the present case they were both got up as well as they could be.—We almost despair of ever seeing another good farce. Mr. H——, thou wert damned. Bright shone the morning on the play-bills that announced thy appearance, and the streets were filled with the buzz of persons asking one another if they would go to see Mr. H——, and answering that they would certainly ; but before night

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the gaiety, not of the author, but of his friends and the town, was eclipsed, for thou wert damned ! Hadst thou been anonymous, thou mightst have been immortal ! But thou didst come to an untimely end, for thy tricks and for want of a better name to pass them off (as the old joke of Divine Right passes current under the *alias* of Legitimacy)—and since that time nothing worth naming has been offered to the stage !

### JANE SHORE

*The Examiner.*

*Drury Lane, January 5, 1817.*

WE think the tragedy of Jane Shore, which is founded on the dreadful calamity of hunger, is hardly proper to be represented in these starving times ; and it ought to be prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain, on a principle of decorum. Of Mrs. Alsop, who is said to have an engagement at this theatre, we have spoken at the time when she appeared at the other house. Those who have before not witnessed her performance, will now probably have an opportunity of seeing her in company with Mrs. Mardyn, and may judge whether the laborious comparison we attempted between her and that lady was well or ill-founded. We see little alteration or improvement in her. Her figure and face are against her ; otherwise she is certainly a very spirited little actress, and her voice is excellent. Her singing, however, does not correspond with what you would expect from her speaking tones. It wants volume and clearness. Mrs. Alsop's laugh sometimes puts us a little in mind of her mother : and those parts of the character of Violante in which she succeeded best were the most joyous and exulting ones : her expression of distress is truly distressing. Miss Kelly played Flora ; and it was the only time we ever saw her fail. She seemed to be playing tricks with the chambermaid : now those kind of people are as much in earnest in their absurdities as any other class of people in the world, and the great beauty of Miss Kelly's acting in all other instances is, that it is more in downright earnest than any other acting in the world. We hope she does not think of growing fantastical, and *operatic*. The new pantomime is very poor.

### MISS O'NEILL'S WIDOW CHEERLY

*The Examiner.*

*Covent Garden, January 12, 1817.*

WE have few idols, and those few we do not like to lose. But the warmth of our idolatry of Miss O'Neill will be brought to a much lower temperature if she goes on playing comedy at this rate. We

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cannot form any compromise in our imagination between Belvidera and the Widow Cheerly. To speak our minds plainly, Miss O'Neill is by far the best tragic actress we ever saw, with one great exception, and she is the worst comic actress we remember, without any exception at all. Her comedy is cast in lead, and sad *doleful dumps* she makes of it. It is tragedy in low-heeled shoes. Her spirit is boisterousness; her playfulness languid affectation; her familiarity oppressive; her gaiety lamentable. There never was such labour in vain. A smile trickles down her cheek like a tear, and her voice whines through a repartee in as many winding bouts of mawkish insinuation as through the most pathetic address. We cannot bear all this evident condescension; it overpowers us. In one scene she was very much applauded: it is that in which the Widow Cheerly gives a characteristic description of her former husband's introduction of her to his bottle-companions: 'This is *my* wife,' &c. Now it cannot be denied that she mimicked the airs and manner of the fox-hunting squire very well, and her voice fairly gave the house a box on the ear. But we do not wish to see Miss O'Neill in the part of Squire Western. We conceive that this delightful actress cannot descend lower than the soldier's daughter, except by playing the sailor's daughter, and giving the word of command in a striped blue jacket and trowsers instead of a striped green gown. In these tom-boy hectoring heroines Mrs. Charles Kemble, whom, to the best of our belief, she imitates, beats her out and out; and Mrs. Mardyn, besides being taller and handsomer, has really more of the *vis comica*. But we will have done with this ungrateful subject. The comedy itself, of *The Soldier's Daughter*, is the *beau ideal* of modern comedy. It contains the whole theory and practice of sentimentality, of which a bank-note offered and declined is the circulating medium, and a white cambric pocket-handkerchief, that catches the crystal tear in the eye of sensibility ere it falls, the visible emblem. Mr. and Mrs. Melford are an amiable young couple in lodgings and in great distress, but you do not learn how they got into one any more than the other. They utter their complaints, but are too delicate to touch upon the cause, and you sympathise with their sorrows, not with their misfortunes. They have a little girl, who has a little doll, which she christens 'Miss Good Gentleman,' after a person whose name she does not know. This is a very palpable hit, and tells amazingly. The unknown benefactor of these unfortunates *incognito* is a young Mr. Heartall, a wild, giddy character, that is, in the modern sense, a person who never stands still on the stage—who is always running into scrapes, which he walks out of without leaving any apology or account behind him. Then there is the Widow Cheerly, in the same

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house with the Melfords, whose heart and whose *ridicule* are ever open to the distressed, and who makes a match with Young Heartall, because he makes her an offer, it not being consistent with the gallantry of a soldier's daughter to decline a challenge of that sort. Then there is Old Heartall, uncle to Young Heartall, and an East Indian Governor, who says one thing and does another; calls his nephew a scoundrel, and throws his arms round his neck. He is not a character, but a contradiction. Then there is a Mr. Ferret, who commits all sorts of unaccountable villainies through the piece, without any ostensible motives, and at the end of it you find that he has acted upon an abstract principle of avarice. 'If,' he says, 'there had been no such thing as avarice, I had not been a villain.' This is a very edifying confession of faith; and so not finding this principle answer, he repents upon an abstract principle of repentance, and also at the instigation of his old benefactor, (just arrived from the East and accordingly a great moralist), who reads him a great moral lecture, and advises him to give up his ill-gotten gains. As Mr. Ferret submits to his advice backed by the law, Old Heartall is prevailed on to forgive his designs upon the lives, characters, and fortunes of his acquaintance, from an amiable weakness of heart, and because the Widow Cheerly, who intercedes for him, 'has roguish eyes.' Mr. Liston plays a foolish servant in the Heartall family, whose name is Timothy. The name of Timothy is one of the jokes of this part: Mr. Liston's face is the other, and the best of the two.

The whole tone of this play reminded us strongly of a very excellent criticism which we had read a short time before on the *cant* of Modern Comedy, in one of the notes to Mr. Lamb's Specimens of Early Dramatic Poetry:—

'The insipid levelling morality to which the modern stage is tied down would not admit of such admirable passions as these scenes are filled with. A puritanical obtuseness of sentiment, a stupid infantile goodness, is creeping among us, instead of the vigorous passions, and virtues clad in flesh and blood, with which the old dramatists present us. Those noble and liberal casuists could discern in the differences, the quarrels, the animosities of men, a beauty and truth of moral feeling, no less than in the iterately inculcated duties of forgiveness and atonement. With us, all is hypocritical meekness. A reconciliation scene (let the occasion be never so absurd and unnatural) is always sure of applause. Our audiences come to the theatre to be complimented on their goodness. They compare notes with the amiable characters in the play, and find a wonderful similarity of disposition between them. We have a common stock of dramatic morality, out of which a writer may be supplied, without the trouble

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of copying it from originals within his own breast. To know the boundaries of honour—to be judiciously valiant—to have a temperance which shall beget a smoothness in the angry swellings of youth—to esteem life as nothing when the sacred reputation of a parent is to be defended, yet to shake and tremble under a pious cowardice when that ark of an honest confidence is found to be frail and tottering—to feel the true blows of a real disgrace blunting that sword which the imaginary strokes of a supposed false imputation had put so keen an edge upon but lately—to do, or to imagine this done in a feigned story, asks something more of a moral sense, somewhat a greater delicacy of perception in questions of right and wrong, than goes to the writing of two or three hackneyed sentences about the laws of honour as opposed to the laws of the land or a common-place against duelling. Yet such things would stand a writer now a days in far better stead than Captain Ager and his conscientious honour; and he would be considered as a far better teacher of morality than old Rowley or Middleton, if they were living.'

### PENELOPE AND THE DANSOMANIE

*The Examiner.*

*King's Theatre, January 19, 1817.*

THIS theatre was opened for the present season under very favourable auspices; and we congratulate the public on the prospect of the continuance of this addition to the stock of elegant amusement. Though the opera is not among the ordinary resources of the lovers of the drama, it is a splendid object in the *vista* of a winter's evening, and we should be sorry to see it mouldering into decay, its graceful columns and Corinthian capitals fallen, and its glory buried in Chancery. We rejoice when the Muses escape out of the fangs of the law, nor do we like to see the Graces arrested—in a *pas de trois*. We do not 'like to see the unmerited fall of what has long flourished in splendour; any void produced in the imagination; any ruin on the face of Art.' At present we hope better things from the known tastes and talents of the gentleman who is understood to have undertaken the management of the principal department, and from what we have seen of the performances with which the company have commenced their career. The pieces on Saturday and Tuesday were the Opera of Penelope by Cimarosa, and the inimitable comic Ballet, The Dansomanie. The first is, what it professes to be, a Grand Serious Opera: but it is somewhat heavy and monotonous. It introduced to the English Stage several actors of considerable eminence abroad. The principal

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were Madame Camporese as Penelope, Madame Pasta as Telemachus, and Signor Crivelli as Ulysses. The last of these appears to be as good an actor as a singer. His gestures have considerable appropriateness and expression, besides having that sustained dignity and studied grace, which are essential to the harmony of the Opera; and his tones in singing are full, clear, and so articulate, that any one at all imbued with the Italian language can follow the words with ease. Madame Camporese performed Penelope, and drew down the frequent plaudits of the house by the sweetness of her voice, and the flexibility of execution which she manifested in some of the most difficult and impassioned passages. If we were to express our opinion honestly, we should say that we received most pleasure from Madame Pasta's Telemachus. There is a natural eloquence about her singing which we feel, and therefore understand. Her dress and figure also answered to the classical idea we have of the youthful Telemachus. Her voice is good, her action is good: she has a handsome face, and *very* handsome legs. The ladies, we know, think otherwise: this is the only subject on which we think ourselves better judges than they.—Of the Dansomanie we will say nothing, lest we should be supposed to have caught the madness which it ridicules so sportively and gracefully. The whole is excellent, but the Minuet de la Cour is sublime: and the Gavot which succeeds it, is as good. Madame Leon was exquisite, and she had a partner worthy of her.

'Such were the joys of our dancing days.'

Really when we see these dances, and hear the music, which our old fantastical dancing master used to scrape upon his kit, played in full orchestra, we do not know what to make of it; we wish we were old dancing-masters, or learning to dance; or that we had lived in the time of Henry iv. The tears do not come in our eyes; that source is dry: but we exclaim with the Son of Fingal,

'Roll on, ye dark-brown years! ye bring no joy on your wing to Ossian.'

## OROONOKO

*The Examiner.*

*Drury Lane, January 26, 1817.*

SOUTHERN's tragedy of Oroonoko, which has not been acted, we believe, for some years, has been brought forward here to introduce Mr. Kean as the Royal Slave. It was well thought of. We consider it as one of his best parts. It is also a proof to us of what we have always been disposed to think, that Mr. Kean, when

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he fully gives up his mind to it, is as great in pure pathos as in energy of action or discrimination of character. In general, he inclines to the violent and muscular expression of passion, rather than to that of its deep, involuntary, heart-felt workings. If he does this upon any theory of the former style of expression being more striking and calculated to produce an immediate effect, we think the success of his Richard II. and of this play alone (not to mention innumerable fine passages in his other performances), might convince him of the perfect safety with which he may trust himself in the hands of the audience, whenever he chuses to indulge in 'the melting mood.' We conceive that the range of his powers is greater in this respect than he has yet ventured to display, and that if the taste of the town is not yet ripe for the change, he has genius enough to lead it, wherever truth and nature point the way. His performance of Oroonoko was for the most part decidedly of a mild and sustained character; yet it was highly impressive throughout, and most so, where it partook least of violence or effort. The strokes of passion which came unlooked for and seemed to take the actor by surprise, were those that took the audience by surprise, and only found relief in tears. Of this kind was the passage in which, after having been harrowed up to the last degree of agony and apprehension at the supposed dishonourable treatment of his wife, and being re-assured on that point, he falls upon her neck with sobs of joy and broken laughter, saying, 'I knew they could not,' or words to that effect. The first meeting between him and Imoinda was also very affecting; and the transition to tenderness and love in it was even finer than the expression of breathless eagerness and surprise. There were many other passages in which the feelings, conveyed by the actor, seemed to gush from his heart, as if its inmost veins had been laid open. In a word, Mr. Kean gave to the part that glowing and impetuous, and at the same time deep and full expression, which belongs to the character of that burning zone, which ripens the souls of men, as well as the fruits of the earth! The most striking part in the whole performance was in the uttering of a single word. Oroonoko, in consequence of his gentle treatment, and the flattering promises that are held out to him of safe conduct to his own country, of the restoration of his liberty and his beloved Imoinda, thinks well of the persons into whose hands he has fallen; and it is in vain that Aboam (Mr. Rae) tries to work him up to suspicion and revenge by general descriptions of the sufferings of his countrymen, or of the cruelty and treachery of their white masters: but at the suggestion of the thought, that if they remain where they are, Imoinda will become the mother, and himself, a prince and a hero, the father

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of a race of slaves, he starts and the manner in which he utters the ejaculation 'Hah!' at the world of thought which is thus shewn to him, like a precipice at his feet, resembles the first sound that breaks from a thunder-cloud, or the hollow roar of a wild beast, roused from its lair by hunger and the scent of blood. It is a pity that the catastrophe does not answer to the grandeur of the menace; and that this gallant vindicator of himself and his countrymen fails in his enterprise, through the treachery and cowardice of those whom he attempts to set free, but 'who were by nature slaves!' The story of this *servile war* is not without a parallel elsewhere: it reads 'a great moral lesson' to Europe, only changing *black* into *white*; and the manner in which Oroonoko is prevailed on to give up his sword, and his treatment afterwards, by a man in British uniform, seems to have been the model of the Convention of Paris. It only required one thing to have made it complete, that the Governor, who is expected in the island, should have arrived in time to break the agreement, and save the credit of his subaltern. The political allusions throughout, that is, the appeals to common justice and humanity, against the most intolerable cruelty and wrong, are so strong and palpable, that we wonder the piece is not prohibited. There is that black renegade Othman, who betrays his country in the hopes of promotion, and the favour of his betters: how like he is to many a white-faced loon, but that 'the devil has not damned them black!' Politics apart—Oroonoko is a very interesting moral play. It is a little tedious sometimes, and a little commonplace at all times, but it has feeling and nature to supply what it wants in other respects. The negroes in it (we could wish them out of it, but then there would be no play) are very *ugly customers* upon the stage. One blackamoor in a picture is an ornament, but a whole cargo of them is more than enough. This play puts us out of conceit with both colours, theirs and our own; the sooty slave's, and his cold, sleek, smooth-faced master's.—Miss Somerville was a great relief to the natural and moral deformity of the scene. She looked like the *idea* of the poet's mind. Her resigned, pensive, unconscious look and attitude, at the moment she is about to be restored to the rapturous embrace of her lover, was a beautiful dramatic picture. She is an acquisition to the milder parts of tragedy. She interests on the stage, for she is interesting in herself. She cannot help being a heroine, if she but shews herself. She was as elegantly dressed in Imoinda, for an Indian maid, in light, flowered drapery, as she was in Imogene, for a lady of old romance, in trains of lead-coloured satin. Her voice is sweet, but lost in its own sweetness; and we who hear her at some distance, can

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only catch 'the music of her honey-vows,' like the indistinct murmur of a hive of bees. Mr. Bengough does not improve upon us by acquaintance. All that we have of late discovered in him is that he has grey eyes. Little Smith made an excellent representative of the coasting Guinea captain. John Bull could not desire to have better justice done to his mind or his body.—Southern, the author of *Oroonoko*, was also the author of *Isabella, or the Fatal Marriage*, in both of which 'he often has beguiled us of our tears.' He died at the age of eighty-six, in 1746. Gray, the poet, speaks thus of him in a letter, dated from Burnham, in Buckinghamshire, 1737. 'We have here old Mr. Southern, at a gentleman's house a little way off: he is now seventy-seven years old, and has almost wholly lost his memory: but is as agreeable as an old man can be: at least I persuade myself so, when I look at him, and think of *Isabella* and *Oroonoko*.'

## THE PANNEL AND THE RAVENS

*The Examiner.*

February 2, 1817.

THERE has been little new this week. A new after-piece or melodrama has been brought forward at Covent-garden, and the old farce of the Pannel revived at Drury-Lane. We can say but little in praise of the former, except the excellence of the acting and the manner in which it is got up. The strength of the house is mustered in a second-rate production, and from the list of names in the play-bills, the public go to see the performers, if not the performance, and come away at least half satisfied. They manage these things differently at Drury-Lane, and not so well. We deny that the comic strength of the two houses is so unequal as is sometimes supposed. For instance, at Drury-Lane, they have Munden, Dowton, Oxberry, and Knight; Harley is droll too; and in women, they beat them out and out, for they have Miss Kelly. To be sure, they have not Liston; so they must kick the beam. Mr. Liston is the greatest comic genius of the age. If we were very dull and sad indeed, we should avoid going to any farce or comedy in which he did not appear, as only tantalising to our feelings, and promising relief without affording it: but we must be dull indeed, if we did not bite at the bait of Mr. Liston's Lubin Log. His comic humour is a sort of oil or 'balsam of fierabras' for all imaginary wounds that are not a foot deep. His laugh might tickle royalty itself after the howling of the rabble, or make one of the wax figures at Mrs. Salmon's relax from the inflexibility of its state. Then there is Miss Stephens at Covent-garden, and there

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are the three Miss Dennets—like ‘Circe and the Sirens three.’ We always see the Miss Dennets at the theatre, and they sometimes glide before our imagination at other times; but we seldom hear Miss Stephens now. We want to see her again in *Mandane*, in which we have seen her eight times already, and to hear her sing *If o’er the cruel tyrant Love*, which we could hear her sing for ever. We want to see her in *Polly* for the seventh time, and in *Rosetta* for the fifth, we believe it will be, when we see her in it again, which will be when she next plays in it. Pray how long will it be first, Mr. Fawcett? We suppose not till Miss O’Neill is tired of tiring the audience in *Mrs. Oakley*, or ‘the ravens are hoarse that croak over Mr. Emery’s head’ in the *Pangs of Conscience*. *Something new, always something new.* That is the taste of Covent Garden, and the town. It is not our’s. We are for something old. *Toujours perdrix.* We like to read the same books, and to see the same plays, and the same faces over again—*always provided* we liked them at first. Now there is one face which we never liked, and never shall like, which is the face of *Tyranny*, and the older it gets, the uglier it gets in our eyes, and in this, as a matter of taste, we differ entirely with Mr. Canning, though he has been declared by a classical authority to be ‘the most elegant mind since Virgil.’ We differ with him notwithstanding.—The *Ravens*, or the *Pangs of Conscience*, is a melo-drame taken from the French, of the same breed, but an inferior specimen, as the *Maid and Magpie*, and the *Family of Anglade*. It is a kind of renewal of the age of augury adapted to the modern theories of probability, by being reduced within the limits of natural history. These pieces take for their text the lines,

‘And choughs and magpies shall bring forth  
The secret’st man of blood.’

In the *Pangs of Conscience*, as in the *Maid of Palisseau*, there is a robbery, a trial of persons innocently suspected of it, and a discovery of the real perpetrators, just at the critical moment, by the intervention of two of the feathered creation. Just as sentence has been pronounced on the supposed criminals (Terry and Blanchard) by the Judge, (Barrymore, who really performed this character admirably) two Ravens fly in upon the stage, the same who had hovered over the scene of the murder and robbery in the adjacent forest, and by their silent but dreadful appeal to the conscience of Jacques du Noir (Emery), who is not like his cousin Bruno du Noir (poor Farley) a hardened, but a conscientious villain, reveal the mystery of the whole transaction, by which the guilty are punished, and the innocent miraculously escape.—There was some fine and powerful acting by

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Emery in the part of the repentant assassin. Bruno in vain endeavours to appease and quiet him, but he still roars out lustily to give vent both to the pangs of his conscience and the 'grief of a wound' which he has got in the encounter from an old rusty fowling-piece of Fawcett's, whom they plunder and kill. The greatest part of this romantic fiction is tedious, and the whole of it improbable, but from the goodness of the acting, and some strokes of interest in the situations, it went off with applause. Of the Pannel, we have only room to add that we think Beatrice, who is the subordinate heroine of the piece, the best specimen of Mrs. Alsop's acting. We saw it from a remote part of the house, and her *voice and manner* at this distance sometimes reminded us of her mother's.

### THE HEIR OF VIRONI

*The Examiner.*

*Covent Garden, March 9, 1817.*

THERE has been nothing new this week but 'The Heir of Vironi, which is of a very old family. This Heir has been coming of age ever since we first frequented the theatre, and has, as we believe, from looking back to authentic records in song-books, melodramas, and musical afterpieces, been deprived of and reinstated in his titles and possessions, any time these fifty years last past. An outlawed robber (Mr. Farley, who was relieved in this part by Mr. Connor in consequence of indisposition) takes the name and claims the castle of the Heir of Vironi (Mr. Abbott), who has gone to the wars, and not been heard of for twelve years. The object of this false assumption of character is to gain possession of or to rob the castle (we could not tell which), and also to gain, as a master stroke *en passant*, the hand of Miss Stephens, who is called Laurina, the daughter of a neighbouring Count. In this character she sings some songs, which were not worth her singing, and which, even sung by her, were not worth hearing twice—though they were encored. It is well that as they are not sweet, they are short. Mr. Connor, the disguised outlaw, is accompanied in his enterprise by Stephano (Mr. Liston), a half-knavish, half-foolish servant, who does nothing or as little as possible to help or hinder him. This Stephano is meant for a wag; but so little does the part itself answer to this intention, that its insipidity deprived the actor of 'all power of face,' and his natural humour congealed and petrified hangs like an icicle upon the wall. Mr. Connor, however, by virtue of the feather in his hat, and the heroic cut of a painted vest with shining spangles, prevails on the old Count (Blanchard) to favour his pretensions and promise him his daughter's hand. To this last project Miss Stephens

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strongly objects from her predilection for another lover (Mr. Duruset, her first cousin, which degree of relationship in modern melo-dramas is generally made the proximate step to a matrimonial alliance)—and in his designs upon the castle with its appurtenances the false Heir of Vironi is opposed by the old steward, Bellino (Fawcett), who has not the faculty of seeing likenesses where they do not exist, and flatly shuts the gates of the castle in his face. In the meantime, and opportunely enough for the credit of Fawcett's genealogical sagacity, the true heir (Abbott) arrives with his servant, the true Stephano; for Mr. Liston is but a counterfeit, as well as his master. The two pretenders to the heirship of Vironi face and out-face one another: an appeal is made to documents, and the outlaw produces one manufactured for him by an attorney of Naples, 'a secretary to the devil,' which, however, proves fatal to the pretensions of his employer, by proving too much. The signature of old Bellino, as an old and faithful servant in the family, is affixed to the deed; but from the date, as well as the evidence of Bellino himself, this deed is shewn to be a forged copy, because at the time the true deed was drawn, Bellino could only sign his mark to it, as his hand had been disabled by a dislocation of the shoulder-bone, or some such apposite casualty. Mr. Connor and Mr. Liston are then carried off in becoming consternation by the guards, the finale strikes up, and the curtain falls—very much to the relief and satisfaction of the audience.

Mr. Booth continues to give his imitations of Mr. Kean at this House, with the approbation of the Managers, and with the consent of the audience, whose opposition has been silenced, partly by an apology from Mr. Booth on Saturday night, throwing himself on the mercy of the House, and partly by the administration of club-law to all those persons who thought the public had a right to express their disapprobation as well as approbation of the behaviour of an Actor or the Managers of a Theatre towards them. Several persons who cried 'Off, off' were turned out for disturbing the peace and unanimity of the audience, when not a single word could be heard for the noise on both sides; and those who said they had a right to express their dislike of the public conduct of a servant of the public, were told very cavalierly, 'that if they did not like it they might go somewhere else.' It seems that the public have nothing to do with the determinations of the Managers, but to obey them. This doctrine is not original, but borrowed from high authority. We have here an example of the *imperium in imperio*. The Managers of Covent-Garden appeal from the public ignorance to their own disinterested perception of what is good for them, brow-beat and bully when they cannot get their ends by fawning on the mob, call in the aid of those enlightened and

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impartial judges and distinguishers between right and wrong, their watermen and firemen, hack authors and box-lobby-loungers, suspend the Habeas Corpus during their own good pleasure and ill behaviour, bring in a Gagging Bill for the Pit Critics, make it sedition to hiss Mr. Booth, and high treason to hoot at the Managers, and shelter the badness of their cause and impudence of their pretensions behind the impenetrable front of their theatrical premier and plenipotentiary, Mr. Fawcett.

### JOHN GILPIN

*The Examiner.*

*Drury Lane, May 4, 1817.*

WHEN Mr. Dowton advertised for his benefit that he was to appear in the after-piece as John Gilpin, and to ride for that night only, we immediately felt tempted to go as the self-appointed executors and residuary legatees of the original author of the story, who concludes his account with these two lines—

‘ And when he next does ride abroad,  
May we be there to see.’

So we took upon us to fulfil Cowper’s wish, and went to see, not John Gilpin, nor, as we are credibly informed, even Mr. Dowton, but something very laughable, and still more absurd, which had however a certain charm about it, from the very name of the hero of the piece. We have an interest in John Gilpin; aye, almost as great an interest as we have in ourselves; for we remember him almost as long. We remember the prints of him and his travels hung round a little parlour where we used to visit when we were children—just about the time of the beginning of the French Revolution. While the old ladies were playing at whist, and the young ones at forfeits, we crept about the sides of the room and tracked John Gilpin from his counter to his horse, from his own door to the turnpike, and far beyond the turnpike gate and the bell at Edmonton, with loss of wig and hat, but with an increasing *impetus* and reputation, the farther he went from home.

‘The turnpike men their gates wide open threw,  
He carries weight, he rides a race,  
’Tis for a thousand pounds.’

What an impression was here made, never to be effaced! What a thing it is to be an author, and how much better a thing it is to be a reader, with all the pleasure and without any of the trouble—but without any of the fame, you will say. That is not worth two-pence.

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And yet true fame is something, the fame, for instance, of Cowper or of Thomson—not to live in the mouths of pedants, and coxcombs, and professional men, but in the heart and soul of every living being, to mingle with every thought, to beat in every pulse, to be hailed with transport by those who are young, and to be remembered with regret by those who are old, to be ‘first, last, and midst’ in the minds of others. True fame is like a Lapland sun, that never goes down; it rises with us in the morning, and rolls round and round till our night of life. Why, look here, what a thing it is to be an author! John Gilpin delighted us when we were children, and were we to die to-morrow, the name of John Gilpin would excite a momentary sense of pleasure. The same feeling of delight, with which at ten years old we read the story, makes us thirty years after go, laughing, to see the play. In all that time, the remembrance has been cherished at the heart, like the pulse that sustains our life. ‘That ligament, fine as it was, was never broken!’ and yet it was nearly broken the other night, in the after-piece of this name, and would have been quite so for the evening, if it had not been for Mr. Munden, who, as a subordinate agent, prevented Mr. Dowton from breaking his neck in the principal character. We differed from the audience on this occasion, who did not much relish Mr. Munden in his part of a cockney: we relished him altogether and mightily. His speech, his countenance, and his dress, were in high costume and keeping. There was a greatness of gusto about Timothy Brittle, Mrs. Gilpin’s favourite but unfortunate son-in-law. It might be said of Mr. Munden in this character, that not only did his dress appear to have come fresh from the shop-board, his coat, his pantaloons, his waist-coat—but his speech was clipped and snipped as with a pair of sheers, and his face looked just as if the tailor’s goose had gone over it. It was a fine and inimitable piece of acting, but it was damned.—Dowton, in *The Rivals*, played Mrs. Malaprop, and Mrs. Sparks played Sir Anthony Absolute. We cannot say much of these transformations, for the performers themselves remained just the same, breeches and petticoats out of the question; nothing was transformed or ridiculous but their dress. Dowton was as blunt and bluff, and Mrs. Sparks was as keen, querulous, and scolding, as in any of their usual characters. The effect was flat after the first *entrée*, and the whole play was, in other respects, very poorly got up;—quite in the comic *négligé* of Drury-lane.—We ought to say something of Mrs. Hill, who came out on Tuesday evening as Lady Macbeth. She is neither a good nor a bad actress. She has, however, a sentimental drawl in her voice and manner which is very little to our taste, and not at all in character as Lady Macbeth. The King never dies. Why should

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Mrs. Siddons ever die? Why, because Kings are fictions in law : Mrs. Siddons was one of nature's greatest works.

### DON GIOVANNI AND KEAN'S EUSTACE DE ST. PIERRE

*The Examiner.*

*King's Theatre, May 18, 1817.*

THE last time we saw the Opera of Don Giovanni was from a distant part of the house : we saw it the other evening near ; and as the impression was somewhat different, we wish to correct one or two things in our former statement. Madame Fodor sings and acts the part of Zerlina as charmingly as ever, but she does not *look* it so well near as at a greater distance. She has too much *em bon point*, is too broad-set for the idea of a young and beautiful country girl : her mouth is laughing and good-natured, but does not answer to Spenser's description of Belphebe,—and it cannot be concealed that Zerlina, the delightful Zerlina, has a cast in her eyes. Her singing, however, made us forget all these defects, and after the second line of *La ci darem*, we had quite recovered from our disappointment. On the whole, we at present prefer the air of *Vedrai Carino*, which she sings to Masetto to comfort him, even to the duet with Don Giovanni. There was some uncertainty about *encoring* her in this song,—not, we apprehend, because the audience were afraid of tiring the actress, but because they were tired themselves. Madame Fodor was *encored* in all her songs throughout the piece.—This might be thought hard upon her ; we dare say she would have thought it harder if she had not. Signor Ambrogetti's acting as Don Giovanni improves upon a nearer acquaintance. There is a softness approaching to effeminacy in the expression of his face, which accords well with the character, and an insinuating archness in his eye, which takes off from the violent effect of his action. The serenade of Don Giovanni was omitted. As to Naldi, he is in too confirmed possession of the stage to be corrigible to advice. He is one of those old birds that are not to be caught with chaff. The sly rogue, Leporello, seems to have grown grey in the service of iniquity, and hangs his nose over the stage with a formidable *bravura* aspect, as if he could suspend the orchestra from it. Angrisani is an admirable, and we might say, first-rate comic actor. He has fine features ; a manly, rustic voice ; and we never saw disdain, impatience, the resentment and relenting of the jealous lover, better expressed than in the scene between him and Madame Fodor, where she makes that affecting appeal to his forgiveness in the song of *Batte, Batte, Masetto*. It was inimitably acted on both sides.

## THE EXAMINER

*Drury-lane.*

Mr. Kean has appeared in Eustace de St. Pierre in the Surrender of Calais. He has little to do in it; and he might as well not have appeared in the character, for he does not look well in it. He was badly dressed in a doublet of green baize, and in villainous yellow hose. It was like the player's description of Hecuba—

‘ A clout upon that head  
Where late the diadem stood : and for a robe  
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up.’

But we shall not, ‘ though we have seen this, with tongue in venom steep’d, pronounce treason against fortune’s state,’ or against the Managers of Drury-lane. Mr. Kean shewed his usual talents in this part; but it afforded less scope and fewer opportunities for them than any part in which we have ever seen him. We are not sorry, however, that he has got into the part, as a kind of truce with tragedy. Why should he not, like other actors, sometimes have a part to walk through? Must we for ever be expecting from him, as if he were a little *Jupiter tonans*, ‘ thunder, nothing but thunder?’ It is too much for any mortal to play Othello and Sir Giles in the same week—we mean, as Mr. Kean plays them. He is, we understand, to appear in a new character, and sing a new song, for his benefit to-morrow week.

### MR. KEMBLE’S POSTHUMUS

*The Examiner.*

*Covent Garden, June 1, 1817.*

MR. KEMBLE played Posthumus here on Friday. At present, to use a favourite pun, all his characters are posthumous; he plays them repeatedly after *the last time*. We hate all suspense: and we therefore wish Mr. Kemble would go, or let it alone. We had much rather, for ourselves, that he staid; for there is no one to fill his place on the stage. The mould is broken in which he was cast. His Posthumus is a very successful piece of acting. It alternately displays that repulsive stately dignity of manner, or that intense vehemence of action, in which the body and the mind strain with eager impotence after a certain object of disappointed passion, for which Mr. Kemble is peculiarly distinguished. In the scenes with Iachimo he was particularly happy, and threw from him the imputations and even the proofs of Imogen’s inconstancy with a fine manly graceful scorn. The burst of inconsolable passion when the conviction of his treacherous rival’s success is forced upon him, was nearly as fine as his smothered indignation and impatience of the least suggestion against his mistress’s

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purity of character, had before been. In the concluding scene he failed. When he comes forward to brave Iachimo, and as it were to sink him to the earth by his very presence—'Behold him here'—his voice and manner wanted force and impetuosity. Mr. Kemble executes a surprise in the most premeditated and least unexpected manner possible. What was said the other day in praise of this accomplished actor, might be converted into an objection to him: he has been too much used to figure 'on tessellated pavements, when a fall would be fatal' to himself as well as others. He therefore manages the movements of his person with as much care as if he were a marble statue, and as if the least trip in his gait, or discomposure of his balance, would be sure to fracture some of his limbs. Mr. Terry was Bellarius, and recited some of the most beautiful passages in the world like the bellman's verses. His voice is not 'musical as is Apollo's lute,' but 'harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose.' Mr. Young made a very respectable Iachimo, and Miss Foote lisped through the part of Imogen very prettily. The rest of the characters were very poorly cast.—Oh! we had forgot Mr. Liston's Cloten: a sign that it is not so good as his Lord Grizzle, or Lubin Log, or a dozen more exquisite characters that he plays. It would, however, have been very well, if he had not *whisked* off the stage at the end of each scene, 'to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh.' The serenade at Imogen's window was very beautiful, and was *encored*,—we suspect, contrary to the etiquette of the regular drama. But we take a greater delight in fine music than in etiquette.

### MRS. HILL'S LADY MACBETH

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, April 30, 1817.*

THE tragedy of Macbeth was repeated here last night, for the purpose of introducing Mrs. Hill, from the Belfast Theatre, as Lady Macbeth. Though this lady's performance of the part cannot be censured as a failure, it can hardly be regarded as a successful experiment; for to succeed in Lady Macbeth requires something above mediocrity—something more than acting by rote. Mrs. Hill did not remind us of Mrs. Siddons, as Mrs. Bartley painfully does; but she reminds us of Miss Somerville, which is still less to be desired. She has the same deep internal articulation in some of her tones, and the same romantic, softened, sing-song cadence in others. This false alternation of the tones of the voice was not occasional but pervaded her whole delivery. One of the first instances was when Lady Macbeth, in reading the letter, says, 'When I demanded to know more of

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them, *they made themselves into air* ;' which last words Mrs. Hill gave with a smile of half wonder, and in a tremulous sighing accent. Mrs. Siddons used to give this passage indeed with a slight pause, with a start of surprise, but with nothing of this melting musical indifference. This lady's face is not regular, nor does her person possess much tragic grace : her action has little variety or force. In the banquet scene she wanted that sustained dignity which we have been used to look for in this part. She was, however, received favourably throughout, nor was there any part of her acting that could excite a strong or pointed expression of disapprobation : this negative praise is all we can give to it. Expectation was excited, as it always is on these occasions ; for who would not wish to see another Mrs. Siddons ? who would not wish to be present when a successor worthy of her should appear for the first time on the English stage ? A tragic actress may some time or other arise to play the same parts as she played them : and whenever a candidate is announced for that high place which she filled in the public mind, for her proud throne in the human heart, an involuntary impulse tempts us to the theatre, in the hope that *this may* be she. We have never made any approach to the realization of this wish but in a single instance. Miss O'Neill is almost half a Mrs. Siddons, yet she is not a Lady Macbeth. The character remained to be filled up, and it still remains to be so. Not that we regret this circumstance for ourselves ;—we remember Mrs. Siddons in it, and that is enough for us. It was the first character in which we ever saw her, and the recollection of the impression which she then made upon us is not strengthened by its having been also the last in which we saw her. To have seen her in that character but once, was never to forget her afterwards. It was no more possible to forget her than if we had seen some more than mortal vision. It was as if the Muse of Tragedy had descended to awe us into wonder. Her voice was power : her form was grandeur. Her person was the mould which her lofty and gigantic spirit alone could fill. Her face lightened with awful beauty. We forget many things one after another ; year by year takes away from the list of our remembrances ; but the impression which Mrs. Siddons first made on our minds can never wear out.

### MR. KEAN'S EUSTACE

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, May 15, 1817.*

The Surrender of Calais was performed here last night ; the part of Eustace de St. Pierre by Mr. Kean. We do not well understand why he was selected for this character, or why the character was

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selected for him. It is not enough to say, that it was the least successful of his dramatic efforts (the least successful of them might still be brilliant); but there was scarcely a single point which came in contact with his peculiar excellences. For Mr. Kean merely to walk through his part like an ordinary actor, is for *him* to do nothing: he must have opportunities to shine, and even (we may add) to fail as no other man can do, or he is not himself. The character of Eustace de St. Pierre is that of a plain, blunt man, who is a good citizen, but no actor: who hides, indeed, an heroic spirit, and a tender heart, under a rough, unaccommodating exterior; but whose homely, unaffected sincerity makes him suppress every burst of passion that might seem like ostentation, and every demonstration of the most obvious and natural feelings the moment they rise in his breast. The author has, in fact, been guilty of a transposition of national character. The hero of his story is not essentially French, but an Englishman in downright earnest, and there is nothing less dramatic than the plain, sober, direct, unpretending simplicity of the English character. The stern stuff of which the bosom of Eustace de St. Pierre is composed is very little calculated for theatrical display: the poet has kept the groundwork of the character dark and sullen, nor did it burnish out in the hands of Mr. Kean. The only substitute for the want of passion and expression in such a character would be an appearance of personal dignity, proud in the consciousness of its integrity, but this Mr. Kean wants; and there was little or nothing else by which he could produce an effect upon the audience. Once or twice, however, the natural severity of his voice and countenance relaxed into a momentary expression of tremulous tenderness; as where, after giving the old man the loaf of bread to prolong his daughter's life, he says, hiding his tears, 'The wind affects mine eyes;' and again, in the interview with his son, before he is led to the scaffold, when he breaks hastily from him with an involuntary confession of his weakness—'I looked not for this scene.' These, however, were but faint glimmerings of 'those flashes of his spirit by which he is wont' to irradiate every countenance, and kindle every breast within the circle of his influence, to 'a flame of sacred sympathy.' In the latter scenes of the play Mr. Kean still kept up the same severe tone in the character, when perhaps he should have altered it with the circumstances in which he is placed. Coldness and indifference should have given place to heroic enthusiasm. A true patriot, devoting himself for his country, is lifted far above all competition or bitterness, in the elevation of its feelings, in the exultation of its triumph. Mr. Kean would, therefore, we think, have done more justice to himself and to the character, if, in the scene with the Governor of Calais, where he

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offers himself as a sacrifice, he had been hurried into a tone of more impassioned eloquence, and in that where he delivers up the keys of the city gates to the conqueror, had described the horrors and sufferings of the siege with a voice of indignant humanity, without assuming the tones of personal sarcasm against the English king. Harley was pleasant as La Gloire, but we are old enough to remember Bannister in the part.

### THE ROMP

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, May 23, 1817.*

THE farce of *The Romp* was revived here last night, for the purpose of introducing Mrs. Alsop as Priscilla Tomboy. In all the mischievousness, vivacity, and vulgarity of the part, Mrs. Alsop was eminently successful: it was only in the rich, genial, vinous spirit which her mother threw over it, and made this and all her characters so delightful, that Mrs. Alsop failed, if it could be considered as a failure in any one merely not to do what Mrs. Jordan did. Mrs. Alsop's voice is clear and articulate in a very high degree; her humour is arch and pointed; she gives a great deal of life and motion to the parts in which she acts, without running into extravagance: and in a character like the present, her face and figure are not very much against her. The pleasure we received from her acting in *The Romp* had hardly any drawback, and she gave to several of the scenes a highly comic effect. The song, 'Oh! how I wish I was married,' in which she sings a kind of lullaby to a doll dressed up as a little baby, and that in which she turns her sweetheart, Watty Cockney, out of the house, were exceedingly ludicrous and piquant. Her boxing with her discarded lover, in the last scene, was perhaps carrying the joke a little too far for the refinement of modern times; but this was the fault of the author, not of the actress. Knight, as Watty Cockney, strutted, jerked, and fidgetted, and smirked about the stage as usual, and with some drollery of effect; but he was not exactly the unconscious, blundering, self-conceited, booby coxcomb, which we expect to see. Knight's excellence is not humour, but vivacity. We laugh at him in his best characters, not from the absurdity of his feelings or pretensions, but from his ludicrous haste to be doing something, from his being the sport of his animal spirits, and kept in constant unnecessary motion by the tingling of his blood. His humour, where he has it, is that of pure *naïveté*; or his absurdities arise from simplicity, not from affectation; and accordingly, he did not make much of the character of Watty Cockney, which is an essence of ignorance and vanity combined. Gattie made an excellent repre-

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

sentative of Old Barnacle; and Miss Mangeon, as Penelope, made a very pretty insipid mediator between her brother Watty and her cousin Priscilla Tomboy, between whom it was often necessary to keep the peace. The farce was well received, and deserved to be so, if the test of a good farce consists in its making us laugh heartily.

### MR. KEAN'S BENEFIT

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, May 27, 1817.*

MR. KEAN had for his benefit last night *Barbarossa*, and the musical afterpiece of *Paul and Virginia*. The house was crowded to excess. The part of Achmet in the tragedy afforded but little scope for the development of Mr. Kean's great talents. The only scene which had a striking and brilliant effect, was that in which the young prince in disguise discovers himself to *Barbarossa*, the murderer of his father, in the presence of his mother. The heroic intrepidity with which he braves the fury of the tyrant, as it relates to himself, and the tenderness of his supplication in behalf of his mother, excited a burst of powerful but transient sympathy in the audience. The rest of the play went off very flatly. The characters were in general cast as badly as possible—not, we suppose, as *foils* to Mr. Kean; for that is quite unnecessary. Mr. Bengough played *Barbarossa*. This gentleman has had the ingenuity to make us regret Mr. Pope. In the afterpiece of *Paul and Virginia*, which we suspect was the chief attraction of the evening, Mr. Kean sang several songs in a clear, finely-toned voice, and with considerable taste and delicacy of execution. He was rapturously *encored* in most of them. If we were disposed to be critical, we should say that his style of singing is not so natural and genuine as his style of acting. A great tragic actor, however, who undertakes to sing, may be excused if he is a little ambitious to show that he knows *how to sing*. Mr. Kean certainly showed that he was not deficient in any of the airs and graces of the art. He trilled, and quavered, and warbled very delightfully, but it was a little too much in the style of Incledon. Mr. Incledon does not act like Mr. Kean—why should Mr. Kean sing like Mr. Incledon? Miss Mangeon was the *Virginia*. The music of this opera by Mazzinghi is pleasing; and we had rather the piece had been given out for repetition to-morrow evening than the tragedy of *Barbarossa*, which will make but a very indifferent substitute for Sir Giles Overreach.

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### MR. KEMBLE'S POSTHUMUS

*The Times.*

*Covent Garden, May 31, 1817.*

MR. KEMBLE played the character of Posthumus last night (as it was announced in the bills) for the last time. We do not wish to see Mr. Kemble play any of his characters for the last time; but if it is not intended to be so, we do not like to have it so announced. We 'begin to doubt the equivocation' of the managers in their constant appeals, not to our hopes, but our fears; and are apprehensive that we may lose Mr. Kemble in some of his last appearances, from not knowing when to trust to these farewell predictions. Posthumus is not one of Mr. Kemble's most prominent characters; for it does not abound in the theatrical exhibition of classical costume or personal grandeur. Still it affords opportunities for the display of that dignity of manner for which this accomplished actor is scarcely less remarkable, and for that impressive vehemence of declamation in delineating the force of any strong impulse or single purpose, in which he succeeds much better than in describing the conflict and fluctuations of different passions. Perhaps Mr. Kemble is unequal to the expression of the jealousy of Othello, the heights and depths of his love, his madness, his tenderness, and his despair, the alternate bursts of all those passions that tear his bosom like a hurricane, by which it is tossed to and fro like the sea; but he is equal to the representation of the jealousy of Posthumus, which is mingled with no other feeling than that of resentment against the imputations thrown on the chastity of his mistress: and when these imputations are converted into apparent proofs against her, is entirely occupied in aggravating its sense of injury and in executing its purpose of revenge. In the two leading scenes with Iachimo, Mr. Kemble was highly impressive: in the first, in exhibiting the lofty and delicate sensibility of wounded pride; in the second, the stronger and more irregular workings of heart-felt passion. His impatient rejection of Iachimo's first proofs of his wife's infidelity, and his subsequent eagerness to get rid of the tortures of suspense, by rejecting all doubts of their truth, were conceived and expressed with equal truth and felicity. In the last scene, in which, after Iachimo has confessed the wrongs he has done to him, he comes forward and says 'Behold him here!' we thought Mr. Kemble failed in characteristic energy and impetuosity. His sudden appearance should have blasted his hated rival like the lightning's flash—his voice should have startled him like a thunderbolt. Mr. Kemble made his approaches too slowly, too deliberately, after too much hesitation, and the effect at last was feeble and unimpassioned. Upon the whole, however, we consider Posthumus, though not one

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of the most striking, as one of his most unexceptionable performances ; allowing for the necessary deficiency of youthful grace in Mr. Kemble's figure, and for his constitutional coldness as a lover in the scenes with his mistress. Mr. Young played the part of Iachimo exceedingly well. The rest of the play was indifferently cast. Miss Foote's Imogen is not the Imogen of Shakspeare.

### MRS. SIDDONS'S LADY MACBETH

*The Times.*

*Covent Garden, June 6, 1817.*

THE re-appearance of Mrs. Siddons at this theatre last night, in the character of Lady Macbeth, for the benefit of Mr. C. Kemble, drew a most crowded house. The boxes were full at an early hour, and the multitudes returning from the Pit-door, soon after it was opened, were immense. We do not know whether the eager expectations excited on this occasion were satisfied. The applause, except on Mrs. Siddons's first entrance and her final exit, was not such as we have witnessed during her performance of this character, in less applauding periods than the present. We confess we were in some degree disappointed ; nor do we think we could have insisted to a stranger on this display of the powers of our great tragic actress, as justifying the high opinion we have always entertained of them. Our enthusiastic admiration of her has bordered very nearly on idolatry : nor do we wish to have the warmth of that enthusiasm lowered by degrees into the cold temperature of laborious respect, for the benefit of any individual whatever. Mrs. Siddons's friendship is, no doubt, due to her family : but her reputation belongs to her country, and ought not to be trifled with on any private consideration. Each year she loses something, not only of native power and majesty, but also of habitual ease and confidence : and each year she is brought forth, with diminished glory, to grace the triumphs of the Kemble family. How long is this to last ? or is it not better to stop at once, before our faltering admiration is compelled to call prejudice to its aid, and to appeal reluctantly from the imperfect reality to our imperfect but more imposing recollections ? Mrs. Siddons will to the last be the noblest ruin of tragic excellence in the world : but we certainly do not wish to witness, or to have to record, the progress of her decay. Her voice is somewhat broken since last year ; her articulation of some words, particularly where the sibillant consonants occur, is defective ; and her delivery of the principal passages is unequal, slow, improgessive, and sometimes inaudible. Her pauses were too long and frequent ; and, to persons at a distance, where the expression of the eye could

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not fill up the vacancy, appeared inexplicable. The audience had to wait for the actress's meaning more than once, which ought never to happen. We ought always either to be occupied with what is actually passing, or to foresee what is coming. In the first soliloquy, more especially, Mrs. Siddons laid a disproportionate emphasis, or gave a louder enunciation to some particular words, while the rest of the sentence subsided in lingering murmurs on the ear, or was buried in the deep bosom of thought. There is no reason, for instance, why the epithet '*sighless* substances,' should be pronounced with a greater elevation of voice than any other word in the same line. We could multiply examples, if it were not a task of all others the most repugnant to our feelings. In the banquet scene, and in the sleeping scene, we thought Mrs. Siddons displayed neither the graceful dignity, nor the appalling preternatural power, which have stamped each of these scenes indelibly on our imaginations. In a word, she appeared to act rather from memory than from present impulse; and to be deficient in that lofty decision and force of manner, which used to characterise her. She was no longer the same Lady Macbeth, the same overpowering terrific being that she once was. Mrs. Siddons will always be superior to every one else in this character; but when she is no longer equal to herself, we no longer wish to see her in it.

### MISS O'NEILL'S BENEFIT

*The Times.*

*Covent Garden, June 9, 1817.*

MISS O'NEILL had a full house at her benefit on Saturday. Of the mild graces and simple pathos of her Mrs. Haller it is needless to speak. Her power in this character is best shown in the tears that suffuse the eyes of her fair auditors, in the tenderness that steals upon and melts every heart. Mr. Kemble's Stranger is one of his most perfect and characteristic parts. Even his defects are indirectly converted into excellences. A deep fixed melancholy sits upon his brow; hope has long left his worn and faded cheek; his still and motionless despair has almost changed him to a statue, but he has not quite 'forgot himself to stone.' A sigh of involuntary tenderness heaves his stately form, and shows that there is life in it; a tear, 'unused to flow,' stands ready to start from either eye; a pang of bitter regret quivers on his lip; his tremulous hollow voice, labouring out its irksome way, seems to give back the echo of years of departed hope and happiness. He is like a sentiment embodied: a long habit of patient suffering, not seen but felt, appears to have subdued his mind, and moulded his whole form. We could look at Mr. Kemble

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in this character, and listen to him, till we could fancy that every other actor is but a harlequin, and that no tones but his have true pathos, sense, or meaning in them. 'So fare thee well, old Jack!' We ought to say so. You are a very, very old friend. Our liking The Stranger so well was, we believe, one reason why we laughed so heartily at Katherine and Petruchio, which followed. We never saw Miss O'Neill to such advantage in comedy. We never saw her get under a table before. She really makes a very formidable and spirited shrew; and, after some ineffectual struggles, she gives in her submission very prettily at last. Mr. Young is an excellent Petruchio; and the whole farce went off with the greatest *éclat*. The Miss Dennetts danced in a new divertisement for the occasion.

### MRS. ALSOP'S BENEFIT

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, June 11, 1817.*

MRS. ALSOP had for her benefit last night The Trip to Scarborough, in which she played Miss Hoyden with a great deal of rustic *naïveté* and bouncing spirit; The Devil to Pay, in which Jobson's strap and the lamb's wool operated upon her, as Nell, very fantastically and naturally; and The Wedding Day, in which she did not sing the favourite song of 'The Dead of the Night' as well as she might have sung it. The house was crowded, and, by the bill of fare, it appears that the lady, as is the custom, was determined to give her friends and the public a *bumper* in return. We like to see overflowing audiences on these occasions for the sake of the actor or actress; but we confess, we shrink from these crowded bills of entertainment for our own. Two pieces, a stock tragedy or comedy, and a good afterpiece, are enough, in all conscience, to satisfy the most voracious audience. Anything beyond that is making a toil of a pleasure. We may be tired even with laughing; and we should not have been sorry to have come away immediately after Dowton's song of the two Jackdaws in The Devil to Pay, which we laughed at till we were heartily tired, and hope to do so again when he next sings it. Dowton makes a very good Jobson, though he is not equal to Bannister. Mrs. Alsop also makes a very good Nell: but Mrs. Jordan's Nell was heavenly. In that character, as in all others of the same kind, she did indeed 'take the ravished soul, and lap it in Elysium,' by her balmy voice, and her heart, which was in her voice, and which ran over with the cordial intoxication of human-kindness; and by her honest face, which shone, like the sun, with good nature:

'And glorious, total want of vile hypocrisy.'

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## A NEW FARCE

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, June 12, 1817.*

LAST night, after the excellent comedy of the Hypocrite, and the Rival Soldiers, a new afterpiece was brought out, under the title of Incog. It has very little merit of any kind, original or borrowed. The plot is taken up in an explanation of what is to happen, and a recapitulation of what has happened; which, after all, amounts to no more than this—that a young lady, a Miss Pemberton (Mrs. Davison), being alarmed at some inattentions on the part of her lover (Mr. Kent), comes up from the country with her maid (Mrs. Alsop), both disguised in men's clothes; and, after several interviews with her lover, in which she makes him jealous of herself, as Captain Talbot, is, without any miracle, reconciled to him in her own person, merely by discovering who she is. The two women, the mistress and the maid, appear in their male attire on their first entrance on the stage, which we take to be contrary to the decorum of such transformations. The farce has neither wit nor incident, and passed off with little effect. There was only one passage which seemed to hit the audience. Little Knight, finding that there are two women in disguise, suspects that an old gentleman in the piece may turn out to be a third, and significantly says, 'There's a conspiracy; I see it—a plot, mayhap a plot against the Government.' The house instantly took up the hint, and did not seem disposed to let it drop, but continued in a tumult for several minutes. Mr. Burke has said, 'The English public have distinguishing ears!'

## M. TALMA AND Mlle. GEORGES

*The Times.*

*King's Theatre, June 20, 1817.*

THE recitations of M. Talma and Mademoiselle Georges, in the concert-room of this theatre, last night drew a crowded and brilliant audience, and excited the most extraordinary expectations. These expectations, high as they had been raised, were more than fulfilled. There was, we believe, but one sentiment of admiration raised in every person present, mingled with that species of interest and gratification which arises from witnessing an exhibition of excellency not more admirable than it is new. The face of Mademoiselle Georges is handsome, and unites grandeur with softness. To great regularity of features she joins the most undulating flexibility of expression; and in this respect the transitions in her countenance, as well as in her actions and her tones, instead of being influenced by the supposed monotony of the

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French stage, are more quick, more extreme, and more unceasing, than any thing to which we are accustomed in our own. Indeed, once or twice the sudden change from masculine fierceness to a softness the most sensitive and feminine, jarred a little upon our habitual preconceptions of theatrical uniformity. Her person is large, and in some degree unwieldy, but not so as to interfere with the grace or dignity of her deportment in the more impassioned scenes. Of M. Talma's acting we can hardly speak highly enough. Neither his face nor person is much in his favour: the one is flat and round, the other thick and short; nor has his voice much to boast of except a manly strength and depth. He owes every thing to the justness of his conception, and to the energy of his execution. His acting displays the utmost force of passion, regulated by the clearest judgment. It is the triumph of art, but of art still prompted and impelled, and kindled into the very frenzy of enthusiasm, by the inspiration of nature and genius. The declamation in his performance is scarcely attended to: the measure of the verse is entirely subordinate to the expression, whether slower or quicker, deeper or more vehement, of thought and feeling. In some parts he was electrical, in all impressive and admirable. In Manlius, in *Œdipus*, and in *Orestes*, he equally showed the master of his art. We shall take the earliest opportunity of referring to some of the particular passages which most forcibly arrested our attention, and called forth the enthusiastic plaudits of the audience.

*June 28.*

The performances at the Opera House finished at too late an hour on Thursday night to allow of our saying any thing about them in yesterday's paper. We must, however, seize a little space in our journal of to-day, to express the exquisite pleasure which we derived from the recitations generally: but in the passages from the *Philoclete*, Talma's acting was greater than we can possibly describe: he really penetrated us with horror at the description which he gave, and the semblance he afforded, of a man left wounded, betrayed, and forlorn, on a desolate island. Mademoiselle Georges was, we think, most happy in the part of *Athalie*: we wish Mademoiselle Georges herself could see Mrs. Siddons in *Lady Macbeth*.

## THE LITTLE THEATRE

*The Times.*

*July 8, 1817.*

THE Little Theatre in the Haymarket opened last night for the season, with *Exit by Mistake*, *The Village Lawyer*, and *Ella Rosenberg*—three pleasant things, pleasantly got up. We like the Little Theatre; first,

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because it is little : and second, because it is full. We seem to shake hands with the company and with the actors, and to feel ourselves instantly at home there ; and we *gulp* down our critical objections, if we find them rising in our stomachs, for the sake of ‘ auld lang syne.’ We do not know that we are right in this ; but we cannot help liking old friends and old faces better than new ones. In this respect we agree with honest Crockery, in *Exit by Mistake*, who regrets all the old grievances he misses, and blubbers over all the new improvements he meets with on his return from abroad. We consider this character as one of the most humorous inventions in modern comedy or farce : and it is excellently played by Tokeley. The rest of the piece is inferior. One may say, with Shakspeare, of most of these three-act pieces, that ‘ they are tedious and brief.’ The *Village Lawyer* is one of the most inimitable productions of the inimitable O’Keefe. We were glad to find Mathews in it. Mr. Butler, from the York Theatre, played Sheepface, but not with simplicity of knavishness enough. The young lady who appeared as the heroine in *Ella Rosenberg* has a pleasing voice and figure ; she speaks, however, too much in a singing tone, and is a little too much in the sentimental school of Miss Somerville. There were several undesigned political clap-traps in this romantic drama which took amazingly. For example, Rosenberg, who has been betrayed and unjustly imprisoned by his enemy, Montfort, a favourite of the Elector, says, in excuse for the neglect of him by the latter, in no very courtly language, ‘ But the Prince is surrounded with rascals and sycophants ; ’ at which there was long and loud applause.

### MR. AMHERST’S SHYLOCK

*The Times.*

*Haymarket Theatre, July 15, 1817.*

A MR. AMHERST, from the Theatre Royal, Cheltenham, made his appearance here last night, in the character of Megrim, in *The Blue Devils*, and in that of Shylock, in the *Merchant of Venice*. He was very favourably received in both ; and we are inclined to think his delineation of the comic character was the most successful. He has a plain, strong, natural manner in expressing common emotions of a gloomy and irritable cast, as they arise ; but his powers seemed frequently to fail under the more impetuous tide of feeling, and lofty imaginative passions, which belong to Shylock. His familiar prose style of speaking did not appear a ground from which the poetical parts of the character rose with greater prominence and effect, but the indifferent and unraised tone of comedy, the *sermo humi obrepens*, clung to and impeded his most lofty flights of declamation. The

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vacillating, desultory, discontinuous mode of common speech is not, in this respect, proper to tragedy. The expression of passion, to be natural, must have corresponding force and intensity; the voice must be agitated, must heave and swell with almost uncontrollable vehemence, like the sea loud-lashed by furious storms. *Spiritus precipitandus est*: the whole man must move in concert, and partake of the tumult and impulse of the imagination. If this *momentum* is not given and sustained, whatever inflections or transitions it admits, the high purposes of tragic acting are not answered: the ends of truth are not attained. Mr. Amherst's face is strongly marked, the features having a certain resemblance to Kemble's; and his eye is expressive; but the head is disproportionately large, compared with the rest of his figure; and in his action there is neither sufficient dignity nor decision. He sometimes reminded us of other actors, particularly of Young, though his articulation is by no means so distinct and full. Mr. Butler played Launcelot Gobbo without much effect. Mrs. Glover was Portia. The rest of the piece was very tolerably cast, considering that the summer theatres do not profess tragedy.

We liked Mr. Butler's Sheepface better on a second representation of it. He has certainly great power of face, which only wants cultivation and management to make him a valuable addition to rustic comedy.

### MR. MATHEWS

*The Times.*

*Haymarket Theatre, July 16, 1817.*

It was understood that Mr. Mathews was to have played Rover, in *Wild Oats*, at this theatre last night, with imitations; and as a considerable number of persons had come with a view to see this part of the performance, the unexpected apology which was made for his absence on account of indisposition did not give satisfaction to the whole house, and the substitution of Mr. Russell to act the part was not very cordially received, particularly by the galleries. We were not, however, at all sorry ourselves, for we like the part of Rover much, and were not anxious to have it burlesqued or mimicked out of our imaginations by Mr. Mathews's knack at transposition. Russell got through the part indifferently enough to excite some pain at the time, but to make no lasting impression afterwards. We think just as we did before of Elliston's manner of personifying this character; of that mixture of half-serious sentiment, of half-affected jocularity which he threw into it; of his friendly impudence getting him into scrapes, and his careless good nature floating him out of them; of his broken fortunes and laughing animal spirits; the sunshine within

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instantly breaking through, and dissipating the cloud gathering upon his face: but Mathews would have marred all this, and made us laugh at the character as well as at himself. Mrs. Glover's Lady Amaranth is one of her best parts. There is often an exuberance in this lady's acting which the reserve of Quaker decorum happily suppresses, an *en bon point* in her manner, as well as person, which her Quaker habit in some measure hides; and she gives to the part all the real good nature and cordiality of feeling which are concealed under its prim, leaden-coloured drapery. Mr. Tokeley's John Dory is one of his very best characters. It is a true, honest, blundering, blustering, inoffensive Jack-tar. He is natural without being coarse, and spirited without being intolerably boisterous. Mr. Butler's Sim was not like Little Knight's; that is, it was not like what it ought to be.

July 23.

Last night Mr. Mathews redeemed his pledge of playing Rover in Wild Oats. The house was crowded to very great excess. Of his Jack Rover we shall say nothing, but that we believe it is not a character of his own choice, and he had the good sense not to burlesque it. His imitations were rapturously cheered by the house. His representation of Blanchard's Menenius was the best. Those of John Kemble, Fawcett, Munden, and Incledon were also excellent. Mr. Mathews is, and always will be, one of the greatest favourites upon the stage, if he is only satisfied with doing what he does best; and we think an actor who gives so much pleasure to others has every reason to be pleased with himself. We hope he is not inconsolable for Mr. Kemble's retirement from the stage. It is more than we shall be as long as we can slip, of a fine summer's evening, into the Haymarket, and see him play Somno and Scout. For our own parts, we have too much respect for Mr. Mathews's real talents to flatter him for what he is not.

### A BOLD STROKE FOR A HUSBAND

*The Times.*

*Haymarket Theatre, July 19, 1817.*

A BOLD STROKE FOR A HUSBAND was acted here last night, and was upon the whole well acted. Those who did not go to be critical (amongst which number we count ourselves) might be entertained and laugh heartily. We are sure the effect produced on us by Villette's advice to Don Julio, how to get rid of the inquiries of her mistress's father—'Tell him you have been courting the maid—tell him you're the baker'—will do us good for a month to come. These things relieve the diaphragm, give a better fillip than an electric shock to the frame,

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and 'cleans the bosom of that perilous stuff that weighs upon the heart.' The Bold Stroke for a Husband is a good comedy, full of lively interest, of shifting situations, of 'hair-breadth 'scapes,' and of that agreeable spirit of raillery which seems quite lost among us at present. Among the best scenes (and which had the most justice done them in the representation) were Terry's (Don Cæsar's) interview with his neighbour's pretty daughter Marcella, whom he does not at all like to marry, but of whom he grows very fond and over sweet upon her, after they have agreed only to make love in jest; and Mrs. Gibbs's affected fine-lady airs, and natural ebullitions of vulgarity, in the interview with her mistress's lover, from which we have already extracted that inimitable apostrophe—'Tell him you're the baker.' Mr. Barnard played Don Julio very well. This gentleman has a good voice, good sense, and a good articulation. Mrs. Connor, as Donna Victoria, discovered in her male attire a very pretty figure; and her acting in some of the scenes was not without effect and pathos. Mrs. Glover's Olivia was not so spirited as we have sometimes seen the same character in her hands. Mr. Connor looks well in a slashed doublet and hose. Mr. Russell is exquisite only in one character, Jerry Sneak, which, as there is only one perfect statue in the world, the Venus de Medicis, appears to us the only perfect piece of acting; and the question to Olivia about the Jew's-harp almost threw him back into his favourite part. It was a temptation which he very narrowly escaped.

### THE WIZARD

*The Times.*

*English Opera-House, July 28, 1817.*

ON Saturday a new melo-dramatic romance was brought out at this theatre, under the title of The Wizard, or The Brown Man of the Moor. The piece is founded on the story of The Black Dwarf, in the Tales of My Landlord: we cannot say that the interest is heightened in the dramatic form it has received.

The real character and pretensions of The Wizard are concealed under too deep a disguise to excite much interest in his fate, or curiosity as to his identity; and the *dénouement* of the story is involved in too many circumstances of improbability, and in too many supposed changes of character and situation, to excite much pleasure or receive a very cordial assent. Mr. H. Johnston's mode of performing the part of The Wizard did not remove this inherent objection—a want of sympathy. He stalks and threatens in a very formidable and significant manner; but then there is nothing that awakens a mysterious awe or superstitious terror in the spectator: we are more afraid of his body than of his mind; and the energy that he displays is that of a

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captain of banditti rather than of a being endowed with preternatural powers. Miss Kelly's acting (as Isabel Vere) did not aid the deception of the scene. Miss Kelly plays these young lady-like romantic characters in a very pretty *make-believe* way, and talks about being like the heroine of some old romance with a sort of unmeaning mincing affectation, quite unlike her usual right-down hearty natural manner. Her Isabel Vere is not as good as her Maid of Palaiseau: nor are her tragic country wenches (whatever her flatterers may say) so good as her comic chambermaids. A checked apron and mob-cap become her better than an Indian shawl and turban. The heroine and the fine lady do not sit naturally upon her, and she has too much good sense and real character in herself to succeed in affectation. We have made these remarks, because we think it possible even for such an actress as Miss Kelly to be spoiled; and if anything could spoil her, it would be some of the parts which we have seen her play at the Lyceum. Mr. Bartley, as Hobbie Elliot, was as interesting as so fat a gentleman in circumstances of amorous distress could be; and what added to the pathos of his situation was his excessive uneasiness and noisy bustle to get out of it. The rest of the piece was tolerably got up, and the whole went off with slow *éclat*. The style and sentiments of this piece are made up of that old stale commodity, *common-place*, worn extremely thread-bare. The music is either indifferent or Scotch; and the songs are neither common sense nor English. In proof whereof take the following, by Miss Kelly:—

' As dreams before the waking eye,  
Or rainbow in an April sky,  
As dew-drops with the morning fly,  
So fades the rose!  
As smiles when grief demands a tear,  
Or joy, o'er friendship's early bier,  
As hope delay'd from year to year,  
So fades the rose!  
As spring when autumn chills the plain,  
As beauty flies from age and pain,  
Or love when stung by cold disdain,  
So fades the rose!'

This is, we suppose, what is meant by writing *nonsense verses*.

## MUNDEN'S SIR PETER TEAZLE

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, September 8, 1817*

THIS theatre opened on Saturday with *The School for Scandal* and *Past Ten O'clock*. The chief novelty in the former was Munden's

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Sir Peter Teazle. We cannot speak very favourably of it. He did not feel at home in the part, which is indeed quite out of his way. His lengthened visage and abrupt tones did not suit the character or sentiments of Sir Peter. Sir Peter is a common every-day sort of character, a tetchy amorous old bachelor, who has married a young wife, with an uneasy consciousness of his own infirmities, and placed in situations to make those infirmities more ridiculous. But still he is a classical character, and not a grotesque; and, therefore, the actor's peculiar talents were thrown away upon him, or rather were judiciously kept as much as possible in the back ground, and hardly dared to show themselves once the whole evening. Mr. Munden went through the part with laudable gravity and decorum, without *making any hole in his manners*; nor did he purposely play the clown or *pantomime* in any of the scenes. Yet the negation of farce is not comedy. Sir Peter was a knight newly dubbed as well as married, a gentleman on his good behaviour both with his mistress and the public. We missed the irresistible expansion of his broad, shining face; and reckoned up a number of suppressed shrugs, and embryo grimaces, that shrunk from the glare of the new gas lights. His eyebrows were not lifted up with wonder; his lips were not moistened with jests as with marmalade; nor did his chin drop down once its whole length as with a total dislocation of his ideas. In the scene of the discovery in the fourth act, where his wife as 'the little *French Milliner*' is concealed behind the screen, he took a greater license, but from the mechanical restraint to which he had been subjected, there was something even here dolorous and petrified in his manner. If, however, Mr. Munden did penance in Sir Peter, it was a holyday-time with him, high carnival in Old Nosy in the farce, where he made himself and the audience amends for all the temptations he had resisted to indulge his natural genius, and let out his whole faculties of face, voice, and gesture. In his character, as an old steward, he is reeling-ripe from the beginning to the end of the piece; and he produces a dizziness in the heads of the audience as unavoidable, though more pleasant than that which overtakes the passengers in a Margate hoy. The School for Scandal was, in the other characters, cast much as usual, and as well as the strength of the company in genteel comedy would permit. Mrs. Davison's Lady Teazle, though not without spirit, is too coarse and hoydening. Wallack's Joseph Surface wanted dignity and plausibility. Not to compare him with old Jack Palmer, he does not hit off the officious condescending solemnity of the character so well as Young. He seems sulky and reserved, instead of being self-complacent and ostentatious; to shrink into a cautious contemplation of his own designs and villainy, instead

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of protecting others under the shadow of his assumed virtues, and covering their failings and defects with a veil of pompous sentiment. It was said of Garrick, that he played the footman too like the fine gentleman; Mr. Wallack, on the other hand, plays the fine gentleman too much like the footman. When dressed to most advantage, he puts us in mind of a valet out of livery. Mr. Rae's Charles Surface was without any thing to recommend it, but the wit, gaiety, and magnanimity of the author. His mode of speaking is more harsh and untunable in comedy than in regular declamation, which in some measure hides its habitual defects. It is a brogue in full gallop suddenly stopped short by the turnpike gate of criticism. Harley's Sir Benjamin Backbite was inoffensive from its insipidity; and Knight as old Crabtree had painted his eyebrows very naturally. The house was not very crowded. The curtain drew up punctually at seven, without any previous expression of impatience; and the play was over before ten: but the rapidity with which the acts followed one another, and the almost immediate interruption of the music between the acts as soon as it had struck up, produced on us an unpleasant effect. It was like going a journey in the mail-coach, where they do not allow you time for your meals. A good play, like a hearty dinner, requires some time for digestion: the music in the orchestra acts upon the imagination, like wine upon the stomach; and habit makes it as ungrateful to us to be disappointed of the one as to be deprived of the other.

### MR. YOUNG'S HAMLET

*The Times.*

*Covent Garden, September 9, 1817.*

THIS theatre opened last night with Hamlet, and the Miller and his Men. The chief improvement in the house seems to us to be the large mirrors at each end of the first row of boxes, which reflect the company in a brilliant perspective, and have a very magical effect. The great chandelier suspended from the top of the theatre, we should admire more, if it did not put out our eyes in looking at it; nor do we think the glare it produces any addition to the general appearance of the company or the house. The only advantage resulting from it—that of throwing the light upon the countenances of the actors from above instead of from below (which last method inverts the natural shadows of the face, and distorts the expression), is defeated by the gas lights which are still retained between the stage and the orchestra. Nor do we know how these can well be dispensed with, as it is by raising or withdrawing them that the stage is enlightened or darkened as the occasion requires it. The house was

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exceedingly full, and the play went off as well as could be expected. Mr. Young's Hamlet is not his most happy or successful effort. He in a great measure imitates Mr. Kemble, and Mr. Kemble is a bad model in this part; even where he is original he is not more what he ought to be, not more like Hamlet. He declaims it very well, and rants it very well; but where is the expression of the feeling?—where the thought beyond all ordinary means of expression, wrapped up in itself as in a dim cloud, shown most by being hid, that derives its energy from rest, not from action, and is as it were audible from its very silence? Mr. Young, we allow, rehearsed several passages very well, as detached passages from a school-boy's exercise: but he wanted keeping—the fine inflections, sudden or gradual, of the character—the unthought-of swellings of the passion—the involuntary ebbing and flowing of his idle purposes. This actor in fact executes his conception well: but then his conception is either common-place, or wrong. He has not always the judgment or the genius to pitch each passage in the right key, and in harmony with the rest. We will mention only two instances. In reciting the description of man as the noblest of creatures, 'the paragon of animals,' &c., Mr. Young was so vehement, that he seemed quite angry; and his sudden turning round to the players at the conclusion of the speech was exactly as if they had given him some serious offence by their 'smiling.' Again, he spoke the soliloquy after the scene in which the player gives the description of Pyrrhus, in a style not conveying the idea of his own melancholy and weakness as contrasted with the theatrical fury of the imaginary hero, but as if he had himself caught by mere physical infection the very fury which he describes himself to be without. This was certainly not right, but (what is perhaps better) it was applauded. Mr. Bonnell Thornton was Horatio, and appeared not to have recovered all the evening from his fright at first seeing the Ghost. His pronunciation is thick, as if he spoke with pebbles in his mouth; nor is his emphasis judicious. Mr. Egerton's Ghost is the most substantial we ever saw. He does not look like one that has 'peaked or pined' long, and has by no means realized Hamlet's wish—

'Oh that this too, too solid flesh would melt,  
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew.'

Miss Matthews played 'the pretty Ophelia' very pleasingly. She is as good an Ophelia as we have lately seen—better, we think than Miss Stephens, because she does not sing *quite* so well. This character ought not indeed to be in general given to a fine singer; for it has been well observed, that 'Ophelia does not go mad because she can sing, but she sings because she has gone mad.'

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## WILD OATS

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, September 12, 1817.*

THE agreeable comedy of *Wild Oats* was acted here last night, in which Mr. Stanley (from the Bath Theatre) made his first appearance as Rover. He was received throughout with very considerable, and not undeserved, applause. He did not play it like Lewis, he did not play it like Elliston, but he played it better than we have seen it lately performed by anyone. This part, from its nondescript character, and quaint and undefinable mixture of odd qualities, is almost as rarely succeeded in as others of much higher pretensions either from their force or refinement. The serious alternately gives place to the comic, and the comic to the serious; or rather they are both infused into the same situations in such doubtful quantities, that it is hard to say which should predominate. Animal spirits are the chief qualification for an actor in this part, and it is the trusting to their impulse that should float him over all its difficulties, which are more likely to be overcome by carelessness than study. Rover is a young fellow of a sound constitution, with a flighty understanding: the tide of the blood prevails in the character over the tide of genius, and the whims of fortune have more influence on his conduct than the contrivances of his own brain. He laughs without malice; and his tone of sentiment is of the romantic and adventurous, rather than of the solemn and sickly cast. If we were to find fault with Mr. Stanley's delineation of the part, we should say that it was of too unmixed a character: his seriousness was too laboured, and he rose into vivacity with too great an effort. He seemed to repose upon the set speeches too much, as if he was loth to give over his 'face-making,' and when he came to a humorous incident, was determined to make the most of it. He did not leave Rover enough to take his chance. We preferred him very much in his forced character of Young Mr. Thunder to his professional one of a strolling player. He not only looked better for being well dressed, but played the part of the gentleman and the lover better than that of the humourist and the man of genius. He is well-made, treads the stage well, has a good-natured face, and a voice which wants neither strength nor sweetness; but he mouths a little too much, is a little too emphatical and *syllabical* in his enunciation, and is too fond of introducing 'the golden cadences of poesy' into plain speaking. We think him upon the whole, however, an acquisition to the London stage, and hope to see him in other characters, which we think will be found better adapted for the full development of his peculiar powers. We may add, that we saw this gentleman (to great advantage) in some characters at Bath, about a year ago (Young Mirabel was one of them), and could not help thinking of poor

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Wilson in Humphry Clinker. The other characters of the play were admirably got up. We cannot criticise Knight's Sim. It is not acting, but perfect nature. The scene in which, after forcing his purse upon Old Banks, he continues to laugh with involuntary pleasure at his success, while he is taking an inventory of the furniture, and at last throws down his pen and ink in a passion, refusing to go on with his ungrateful task, is a masterpiece. Munden's Ephraim Smooth is as fine, in the way of demure hypocrisy, as Knight's Sim is in the expression of natural simplicity. His dress aided the character : it was out of the same piece of cloth, and his whole person seemed as immovable as one of the pyramids. Ephraim is not a very loquacious character, but Mr. Munden contrives to make his face say a great deal when his characters say nothing. Downton's Sir George Thunder was like a broadside of naval character and sea humour. In the scene in which he has the dispute with Rover, who treats him as an impostor, he is in a perfect storm of passion : his blood rushes into his face, he swears himself out of breath, his hat and wig are thrown into the greatest consternation, and his ruffled dress sympathizes with his rising anger like a turkey-cock's feathers. We missed Mrs. Glover in Lady Amaranth. Mrs. Orger's Jane was excellent. In the afterpiece, Mrs. Alsop played Miss Kelly's part of The Innkeeper's Daughter.

### THE BELLE'S STRATAGEM

*The Times.*

*Covent Garden, September 13, 1817*

MISS BRUNTON appeared in the character of Letitia Hardy, in the well-known comedy of *The Belle's Stratagem*, at this theatre last night. Her reception was highly flattering, and the comedy was given out for Monday next with every mark of applause. This young lady has a small but pleasing figure, her face is pretty, and there is a great deal of animation and expression in her dark bright eyes. Her voice is clear and audible ; but whether from timidity, or want of habit, there is a deliberate sermonising tone in her delivery, which would take from the liveliness and spirit of what she says, if there were any thing lively or spirited in the character itself. Her manner of describing her romantic attachment to the supposed husband of her choice, in the masquerade scene, had little of that ' charming wildness and eccentricity ' which Doricourt ascribes to it. In the same scene, however, she dances the delightful *minuet de la cour* very gracefully, and we do not wonder that Charles Kemble falls in love with her in it ; for who would not fall in love with any woman dancing the *minuet de la cour* in a mask ? In the hoyden character which Letitia Hardy

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assumes to alienate her lover's affections, Miss Brunton was very awkwardly natural; but to our taste she was too awkward and too natural. Some faint traces of elegance and accomplishment might have been suffered to remain, and to subdue the excessive coarseness of her affected rustic demeanour. We cannot, however, pretend to decide upon the merits of this actress till we see her in some other part. The character of Letitia Hardy seems to have been goodnaturally contrived for the young female *débutante*; as it is calculated to display her in a variety of shapes, and at the same time to conceal her real qualifications in all of them. It is comedy with her mask on.

## THE POOR SOLDIER

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, September 15, 1817.*

ON Saturday, after the play of *The Rivals*, in which Mr. Rae mouthed in Captain Absolute, and Mrs. Alsop frowned in Lydia Languish, in which Dowton triumphed in Sir Antony, and Harley fluttered in Bob Acres, we had the delightful musical entertainment of *The Poor Soldier*, for the purpose of introducing a Mrs. Bellchambers (from the Bath Theatre) as Patrick. This lady has assuredly nothing masculine either in her person or manner; and, in the excess of her timidity, she appeared to shrink affrighted from the very character she had assumed. Her acting wanted the spirit which should belong to *The Poor Soldier*, and had nothing of heroism about it, either real or pretended. She failed in her first song also; but in her second and more anxious attempt, she recovered her command of herself, and gave the old favourite song 'My friend and pitcher' in a fine, deep, full, and mellow tone of voice, which we have seldom heard surpassed. Her expression was just, and her style of execution simple and natural. Munden's Darby was a rich comic treat, and was indeed required to sustain the interest of the piece, notwithstanding the romantic sweetness of many of the airs. His face was in full play, and presented, in its incessant evolutions, as many malicious grimaces of an extreme unction as are to be found in a whole shop-window of caricatures. And then he *pokes out* his words just as he does his face, to make such an admirable comment on his looks. His voice is a fine oil for a jest to float in. He is an inimitable fellow! Barnard acted Dermot, and sung the 'Brown Jug' with judgment and effect. If this gentleman does not succeed in all that he attempts (whether as an actor or a singer), he always seems to know what he ought to do. Miss Halford's Nora was not very attractive.

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### DOWTON IN THE HYPOCRITE

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, September 19, 1817.*

THE excellent comedy of *The Hypocrite* was acted here last night. Dowton's Dr. Cantwell, is a very admirable and edifying performance. The divine and human affections are 'very craftily qualified' in his composition, which is a mixture of the Methodist parson ingrafted on the old French pietist, and accomplished Abbé. The courtly air of Molière's *Tartuffe* has been considerably lowered down and vulgarised to fit the character to the grossness of modern times and circumstances: only the general features of the character, and the prominent incidents of the story, have been retained by the English translator, and they seem to require the long speeches, the oratorical sentiments, and laboured casuistry of the original author to render them probable or even credible. It has been remarked, that the wonderful success of this piece on the French stage is a lasting monument of the stress laid by that talking and credulous nation on all verbal professions of virtue and sincerity, and of the little difference they make between words and things. With all the pains that have been taken to bring it within the verge of verisimilitude by the aid of popular allusions and religious prejudices, it with difficulty *naturalizes* on our own stage, and remains at last an incongruous, though a very striking and instructive caricature. Dowton's jovial and hearty characters are his best; his demure and hypocritical ones are only his second best. His Dr. Cantwell is not so good as his Major Sturgeon, or his Sir Anthony Absolute, but still it is very good. Their excellence consists in giving way to the ebullition of his feelings of social earnestness, or vainglorious ostentation; the excellence of *this* in the systematic concealment of his inmost thoughts and purposes. Cantwell sighs out his soul with the melancholy formality of a piece of clockwork, and exhibits the encroachments of amorous importunity under a mask of *still life*. The locks of his hair are combed with appropriate sleekness and unpretending humility over his forehead and shoulders: his face looks godly and greasy; his person and mind are well fortified in a decent suit of plain broad cloth, and the calves of his legs look stout and saint-like in stockings of dark pepper-and-salt fleecy hosiery. Bitter smiles contend with falling tears; the whining tones of the conventicle with the insolence of success, and the triumph of his unbridled rage in the last act over his phlegmatic hypocrisy is complete. He was admirably supported by Mrs. Sparks, as old Lady Lambert, and by Oxberry as Mawworm. This last character is as loose and dangling as the sails of a windmill, and is puffed up and

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set in motion by one continuous blast of folly and fanaticism. The other characters in the piece were less happily supported.

### MISS BRUNTON'S ROSALIND

*The Times.*

*Covent Garden, September 20, 1817.*

At this theatre last night Miss Brunton appeared in *Rosalind, in As you Like it*. She certainly played the part very respectably and very agreeably, but not *exquisitely*; and if it is not played exquisitely, in our mind it is spoiled. 'But would Shakspeare's *Rosalind* do so?' is a question that, if put home as it ought to be, might deter many an accomplished young lady from attempting to give life to the careless, inimitable graces of this ideal creation of the poet's art. Miss Brunton recited the different passages with considerable point, intelligence, and archness, like a lively and sensible school-girl, repeating it as an exercise; but she was not half giddy, fond, and rapturous enough for *Rosalind*. She spoke her sentences with 'good emphasis and discretion,' instead of running herself and the imaginations of the audience fairly out of breath with pleasure, love, wit, and playful gaiety. She has, however, white teeth and black eyes, a clear voice, a pleasing figure, with youth on her side, and a very good understanding to boot. What more can be required in a young actress, except by fastidious critics like us? She sung the *Cuckoo* song very prettily, and was encored in it. The other parts were not very elaborately got up. We liked Mr. Duruset's two songs as well as any thing else. Mr. Young's Jaques was less spirited than we have sometimes seen it: indeed, the character is in some measure spoiled to his hands by the prompt-book critics, who have put a great deal of improper praise of himself into the mouth of the melancholy Jaques. It required some contrivance to make him or Shakspeare an egotist! Mr. Fawcett's *Touchstone* was amusing, but too rapid and slovenly. There are some parts of this character which the actor probably thinks it becoming his Managerial dignity to hurry over as fast as possible. Mrs. Gibb's *Audrey* is almost too good. If 'the gods have not made her poetical,' they have at least inspired her with the very spirit of folly, and with all its bliss. A Russian ballet, and *The Libertine*, closed the entertainments of the evening. The former of these is a curious exhibition of Russian costume, but it does not exhibit the Miss Dennetts to any advantage. The play of *As you Like it* was given out again for Monday, instead of *The Slave*.

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

### THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, September 24, 1817.*

WE congratulate the public on the revival at this theatre of the elegant and lively comedy of *The Suspicious Husband*. We have seldom seen a play of this cast better got up in all its parts. Mr. Pope, who has renewed his engagement here, played *Strickland* in a style of easy dignity and propriety which no other actor on the stage could give to it. Mrs. Orger's *Mrs. Strickland* was exactly what it ought to be. Of Mr. Stanley's *Ranger*, we, upon the whole, think favourably; though the character, which is one made up of hairbreadth 'scapes and dashing adventures, rather than of wit and sentiment, is chiefly to be carried off by an exuberance of animal spirits; and in these we do not think this actor excels. Yet some of the scenes into which he is thrown by accident were very spirited, particularly that where he surprises Mrs. *Strickland*, and afterwards *Jacintha*, in their bed-chambers; and his general air and manner was easy and good-humoured, though not gentleman-like. Our old favourite Mrs. *Mardyn*, as *Jacintha*, spoke the character very prettily and musically, and her shape was harmony itself. The managers will do well to let her wear the breeches to the end of the chapter. In her female attire Mrs. *Mardyn* perhaps has too swimming, incessant, and voluptuous a motion: 'her clothes bear her up most mermaid-like,' and she makes too free and swan-like a use of her neck. Mrs. *Alsop's* chambermaid (*Lucetta*) was a clever piece of acting—forward, bold, mischievous, laughing, and more inviting than tempting. *Knight's* *Taster* was quite as good in its way, which was more remarkable for sheepishness and stupidity than impudence or wit. We did not admire Mrs. *Glover's* *Clarinda* so much as some other of her characters. *Harley*, as *Jack Meggot*, chattered too much like his own monkey. This gentleman may talk as fast as he pleases, but he ought to let us distinguish what the author says. Upon the whole, we regard this play as an addition to the stock amusements of the town. It does not excel (neither is it deficient) in character, wit, or sentiment; but the situations and adventures in it, chiefly the result of *Ranger's* eccentric volatile humour, are truly delightful and dramatic, and the moral is unexceptionable.

*Sept. 29.*

Mr. Stanley repeated the part of *Ranger*, in *The Suspicious Husband*, on Saturday night. We are now confirmed in the opinion which we at first suggested, that this performer has neither the genuine vivacity nor the manner requisite for the line of character which he has chosen. He is a bustling, well-humoured, self-assured actor, and would represent forward impudence to the life; he would shine in the footman *Tom*

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of *The Conscious Lovers*, or probably in the more difficult part of *Brass in The Confederacy*; but he is not at home as a gentleman; he has neither the tones, nor gestures, nor carriage of good society; he does not, we think, want merely polish, he seems to want the mind and taste requisite for such a personation. There are three things which we would especially warn him against:—not to wear his cocked hat awry like a drunken sailor; not to lay all his emphasis on the few stupid oaths which are attached to the part of Ranger; and above all, not to dance like a *figurant* at Sadler's Wells. He may be assured that Garrick did not dance so.

### MR. LISTON

*The Times.*

*English Opera-House, September 25, 1817.*

THE ridiculous plan of having two sets of performances in an evening (as an humble imitation of the all-day turn-outs at Bartholomew Fair) was tried here last night with *negative success*. Hardly anybody came, and those who did come, seemed not willing to go away to make room for their fashionable successors. The idea of supposing that there are two distinct species of operatic playgoers, one whose life begins, and the other whose life expires, as the clock strikes nine at night, is as groundless as it is offensive. After the two first pieces were over, previous to this critical hour, some persons in the pit, whose 2s. worth was out, manifested signs of an inclination to stay in spite of the new arrangement. The manager was called for, and came. He made a set little speech, and was answered in a desultory way, both parties declining to understand one another. A pittance had thrown his shilling extraordinary upon the stage, which Mr. Bartley did not think proper to pick up; and upon this gentleman's representing to them the total subversion of the manager's grand plan, which would result from the determination of the first audience to sit out the second price, the malcontents slowly withdrew, to make room for the crowd who were supposed to be waiting outside, but who did not rush in. So ended this insignificant affair.

Something better than all this was the entertainment of Tom Thumb the Great, which we saw the other evening at Covent-garden, when it was too late to give an account of it: for, after all, the class of persons on whom the lateness of the representations presses the hardest are the theatrical critics. When other people (be the hour what it may) are going home to bed or supper, our task is just beginning—hard task, whether it is to damn or save. But we cannot let a part like Mr. Liston's Lord Grizzle sleep in utter oblivion. What a name and what a person! It has been said of this ingenious and inimitable actor, that he is 'very great in Liston;' but he is still

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greater in Lord Grizzle. What a wig is that he wears ! How flighty, flaunting, and fantastical ! Not like 'those hanging locks of young Apollo,' nor like the serpent-hair of the Furies of Aeschylus ; but as troublous, though not so tragical, as the one ; as grotesque, though less classical than the other. A wag, seeing a print of the Duke of Marlborough's officers at the Battle of Blenheim in full-bottomed wigs, observed that Bonaparte might have said of them, 'Que terribles sont ces cheveux gris,' instead of *cheveux gris* : and the same exclamation might be applied to Lord Grizzle's most valiant and magnanimous curls. This sapient courtier's 'fell of hair does at a dismal treatise rouse and stir, as life were in't.' His wits seem flying away with the disorder of his flowing locks, and to sit as loosely on our hero's head as the caul of his peruke. What a significant vacancy in his open eyes and mouth ! What a listlessness in his limbs ! What an abstraction of all thought or purpose ! With what a headlong impulse of enthusiasm he throws himself across the stage, crying 'Hey for Doctors' Commons,' as if the genius of folly had taken possession of his person ! And then his dancing is equal to the discovery of a sixth sense—which is certainly very different from *common sense* ! If this extraordinary personage cuts a great figure in his lifetime, he is no less wonderful in his death and burial. We consider Mr. Liston as the greatest comic genius who has appeared in our time, and Lord Grizzle as his greatest effort. 'From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step,' and this character would seem to prove that there is but one step *from the ridiculous to the sublime*. Lubin Log, however inimitable, is itself an imitation of something existing elsewhere : but the Lord Grizzle of this truly great actor is a pure invention of his own. His Caper, in *The Widow's Choice*, can alone compare with it in incoherence and volatility, for that too is 'high fantastical'—almost as full of emptiness, in as grand a gusto of insipidity, as profoundly absurd, as elaborately nonsensical. Why does not Mr. Liston play in some of Molière's farces ? We heartily wish that the author of *Love, Law, and Physic*, would launch him on the London boards in *Monsieur Jourdain*, or *Monsieur Pourceaugnac*. The genius of Liston and Molière together would be irresistible.

### MR. MAYWOOD'S ZANGA

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, October 3, 1817.*

MR. MAYWOOD appeared here in *Zanga* last night. It is not certainly from any wish to discourage, but we cannot speak so favourably of his performance of this character as of his *Shylock*. Considerable

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diffidence still appears in this actor's manner, and retards his progress to reputation and excellence. He does not give sufficient scope and vehemence to the impassioned parts of the character, nor sufficient decision and significance to its wily and malignant duplicity. Zanga's blood is on fire; it boils in his veins; it should dilate, and agitate his whole frame with the fiercest rage and revenge; and again, the suppression of his constitutional ardour, of the ungovernable passions that torment and goad on his mind, ought to be marked with a correspondent degree of artful circumspection and studied hypocrisy. In both extremes (for the character is in extremes throughout) we thought Mr. Maywood failed. His rage and hatred, where it had opportunity to vent itself in a torrent of exclamations, was not strong or sustained enough, and appeared in the very tempest and whirlwind of the passion, to recoil affrighted 'from the sound itself had made.' In the concealment of his purposes, and in the villainous insinuations with which he fills Alonzo's mind, 'distilling them like a leprous poison in his ear,' he was 'too tame,' too servile and mechanical, and resembled more the busy, mercenary, credulous tale-bearer, than the dark, secret assassin of the peace, life, and honour, of his unsuspecting patron. The passage in which Mr. Maywood failed most, and in which the greatest symptoms of disapprobation manifested themselves, was that in which the greatest effect is generally produced, and where consequently the expectations are raised the highest: we mean, in the terrific and overpowering exclamation to Alonzo, 'Twas I that did it!' In the long and nasal emphasis which Mr. Maywood laid on the monosyllable 'I' he shocked the ears and tired the patience of the auditors; less, we apprehend, from any thing wrong in his conception of the part, than from the remains of a provincial accent hanging on his pronunciation, and in passages of great vehemence and ardour, preventing him from having the full command of his utterance. In the less violent expression of passion, he was more successful; and gave one or two of the short soliloquies which occur of a more thoughtful and reasoning cast, with considerable depth of tone and feeling. We are not without hopes, when Mr. Kean returns, and imparts some of his confidence and admirable decision to his young rival or pupil, of seeing some very good acting *between* them: we say so without meaning a *double entendre*.

This play of *The Revenge* is certainly a very indifferent piece of work; and in the hero of the story, Alonzo, Mr. Rae *bolied* some very ranting speeches, blank verse and all, clean out of his mouth like shot from the mouth of a cannon, with a tone and emphasis that might have startled ears less accustomed to the 'forced gait' and

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high clattering hoofs of his voice than ours. By stamping so hard, too, he raises not only a shout in the upper-gallery, but a cloud of dust from the green baize on the stage-floor.

### THE REFUSAL

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, Oct. 6, 1817.*

CIBBER's comedy of *The Refusal*; or, *The Ladies' Philosophy*, was revived here on Saturday evening with no very great success. It was the resurrection of the dead. This author's comedies do not at best rise much above mediocrity, and they sometimes (as we fear in the present instance) fall below it. In his lifetime they were, for the most part, alternately damned and successful. A lucky effort was followed up by a flat still-born performance, which in its turn gave rise (the poet's pride being piqued by disappointment) to something lively and enlivening, pleasant though prosing, vapid but not dull. We hope the humane Committee of Drury-lane, in the depth of their researches, and the eagerness of their zeal to recover this author's pieces from an untimely grave, will not single out, as the favourite subjects of their galvanic experiments, those which had never any life in them, even in their lifetime! The fate of poor Colley's productions, and of his reputation, is singular enough, but not difficult to be accounted for. Though a clever man, he had more conceit than cleverness; and the easy assurance with which he gave himself credit for more talent than he possessed excited the resentment instead of the sympathy of his contemporaries, and made them deny him even the merits which he undoubtedly had. He was too happy in his own good opinion to conciliate the cordial good-will of others. Hence, in a great measure, he himself became the butt of those who knew him, and on whom he played off the pleasing artillery of his intellectual airs and graces; and his name has (by one of them, Mr. Pope) been handed down as a by-word to posterity. Cibber was only a coxcomb, but so exquisite a one, as to pass both for coxcomb and blockhead; those who hated him as the one being provoked to call him the other, in proportion as they knew he did not deserve the character. His excellence, however, was as much owing to constitutional vivacity as to genius; and as his natural gaiety and self-satisfaction at times gave a spur to his wit, it also made him at other times careless and remiss; and betrayed him, by an overweening confidence, into more dulness and insipidity than a person of less alacrity of temperament would dare to be guilty of. He was so well pleased with himself at all times, that he liked what he did worst as well as what he did best; and as his vanity was equally

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satisfied in either case, his indolence tempted him to gratify it at as little expense of thought or labour as possible. It naturally followed that he has left more indifferent pieces than good ones; that his best hits are occasional and traditional incidents, such as the covering the husband's face with the handkerchief in the *Careless Husband* (which was taken from a real circumstance); and that his best pieces are more remarkable for a certain facility and gay familiarity of tone, than for depth of character, brilliant wit, or the elaborate graces of composition. Mrs. Glover, in *Lady Wrangle*, was as respectable as so disgusting a character would permit. Mrs. Alsop and Mrs. Mardyn were well contrasted as Sophronia and Charlotte—the hoyden and the philosopher. Dowton's Sir Gilbert was admirable. We liked Mr. Stanley's Frankly much; and never saw Mr. Harley more at home than in *Witling*; his imitation of Braham, in the *cantata*, was indifferent. The play was given out for a repetition on Tuesday without much opposition or applause.

### MR. KEAN'S RICHARD

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, October 7, 1817.*

MR. KEAN has returned to us again (after no very long absence), in the character of Richard the Third. His performance of the part is so well known to the public, and has been so often criticised, that it would be superfluous to enter into particulars again at present. We observe no great alteration in him. If any thing, his voice is deepened, and his pauses are lengthened, which did not need to be. His habitual style of acting is apt to run into an excess of significance; and any studied addition to that excess necessarily tasks the attention to a painful degree. Mr. Pope resumed his situation as King Henry, and was stabbed in the Tower, according to the rules of art. We were glad to see him in the part, though we should have no objection to see the part itself omitted, to make room for the fine abrupt beginning of Shakespeare's Richard the Third, with the soliloquy, 'Now is the winter of our discontent,' &c. In our opinion, the Richard the Third which was manufactured by Cibber, and which has now obtained prescriptive possession of the stage, is a vile jumble; and we are convinced that a restoration of the original play (as written by the original author) would, with the omission of a few short scenes, be an advantage to the managers, and a gratification to the public. We understand, indeed, that something of this sort has been in agitation; and in order to contribute any little aid in our power to so laudable an attempt, we shall here give a few

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of the passages which are omitted in the common stage representation, but which appear to us particularly calculated for stage effect, and which would also fit Mr. Kean's peculiar style of acting, as the glove fits the hand. One of these occurs almost immediately after the first opening soliloquy, in the dialogue between Glo'ster and Brackenbury :—

*Glo'ster.*—Even so ! an' please your worship, Brackenbury,  
You may partake of any thing we say ;  
We speak no treason, man :—we say, the king  
Is wise and virtuous ; and his noble queen  
Well strook in years : fair, and not jealous :  
We say that Shore's wife hath a pretty foot,  
A cherry lip, a bonny eye, a passing pleasing tongue :  
That the queen's kindred are made gentle-folks :  
How say you, Sir ? can you deny all this ?  
*Brackenbury.*—With this, my lord, myself have naught to do.  
*Glo'ster.*—What, naught to do with mistress Shore ?  
I tell thee, fellow,  
He that doth naught with her, excepting one,  
Were best to do it secretly, alone.  
*Brackenbury.*—What one, my Lord ?  
*Glo'ster.*—Her husband, knave :—Would'st thou betray me ? '

We think, if any thing could give additional effect to the fine tauting irony of these lines, it would be Mr. Kean's mode of delivering them. He is almost the only actor who does not spoil Shakspeare.

Again, a very spirited scene of a different description, which is an astonishing mixture of violence and duplicity, occurs when Glo'ster rushes into the apartment where the Queen's friends are assembled, to complain of their taking advantage of his meekness and simplicity :—

*Glo'ster.*—They do me wrong, and I will not endure it.  
Who are they that complain unto the king,  
That I, forsooth, am stern, and love them not ?  
By holy Paul, they love his Grace but lightly,  
That fill his ears with such dissentious rumours !  
Because I cannot flatter, and speak fair,  
Smile in men's faces, smooth, deceive, and cog,  
Duck with French nods, and apish courtesy,  
I must be held a rancorous enemy.  
Cannot a plain man live, and think no harm,  
But thus his simple truth must be abus'd  
By silken, sly, insinuating Jacks ?  
*Grey.*—To whom in all this presence speaks your Grace ?  
*Glo'ster.*—To thee, that hast nor honesty, nor grace ;  
When have I injured thee ? When done thee wrong ?  
Or thee ? or thee ? or any of your faction ?  
A plague upon you all ! '

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This is certainly an admirable conclusion to so modest an introduction. Any one who reads this passage, and who has seen Mr. Kean acquit himself in similar situations, must, we think, feel with us a desire to see him in this. We might multiply these instances of characteristic traits in the adroit and high-spirited Richard. We shall give one more, which is so fine in its effect, and besides, conveys so striking a picture of the outward demeanour which an actor, to fulfil the poet's conception, ought to assume in the part, that we cannot resist giving it entire. It is the scene where he entraps the unsuspecting Hastings :—

*' Hastings.*—His grace looks cheerfully and smooth this morning :

There 's some conceit or other likes him well,  
When he doth bid good-morrow with such spirit.  
I think, there 's ne'er a man in Christendom,  
Can lesser hide his love or hate than he ;  
For by his face straight shall you know his heart.

*Stanley.*—What of his heart perceive you in his face,  
By any likelihood he show'd to-day ?

*Hastings* —Marry, that with no man here he is offended ;  
For, were he, he had shown it in his looks.'

*Re-enter Glo'ster and Buckingham.*

*' Glo'ster.*—I pray you all, tell me what they deserve  
That do conspire my death with devilish plots  
Of damned witchcraft ; and that have prevail'd  
Upon my body with their hellish charms ?

*Hastings.*—The tender love I bear your grace, my lord,  
Makes me most forward in this noble presence  
To doom the offenders : whosoe'er they be,  
I say, my lord, they have deserved death.

*Glo'ster.*—Then be your eyes the witness of their evil ;  
Look how I am bewitch'd ; behold, mine arm  
Is, like a blasted sapling, wither'd up ;  
And this is Edward's wife, that monstrous witch,  
Consorted with that harlot, strumpet Shore,  
That by their witchcraft thus have marked me.

*Hastings.*—If they have done this deed, my noble lord—

*Glo'ster.*—If ? thou protector of this damn'd strumpet,  
Talk'st thou to me of *ifs* !—Thou art a traitor :—  
Off with his head ! Now by St. Paul I swear,  
I will not dine until I see the same.  
Lovell and Catesby, look that it be done.  
The rest, that love me, rise and follow me.'

Now this is despatching business in the true dramatic style. Poets cannot take the same bold licenses, with their characters on the stage, till kings are reinstated in their former plenitude of power. The incident which is here omitted in the acting play of Richard III. has been transferred to Rowe's *Jane Shore*. We should like to see it restored to its original place, and justice done it by Mr. Kean's distorted gestures, and smothered voice, suddenly bursting on the ear like thunder.

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### THE WONDER

*The Times.*

*Covent Garden, October 9, 1817.*

THE Wonder, or A Woman keeps a Secret, was performed here last night with admirable effect. Miss Brunton was the heroine of the piece, the charming Violante. We cannot speak in rapturous terms of her performance of the part. There is in the character itself an extreme spirit, and at the same time an extreme delicacy, which it is not easy to unite. Miss Brunton went through the different scenes, however, with a considerable degree of grace, vivacity, and general propriety, never falling below, and seldom rising above mediocrity. She does not

‘Snatch a grace beyond the reach of art;’

nor, according to another line of the same poet, which seems to convey a perfect idea of female comic acting,

‘Catch ere she falls the Cynthia of the minute.’

We have already objected to this young lady’s recitation, a certain didactic, monotonous *twang*, and we cannot upon the present occasion recant our criticism. Miss Foote was Violante’s friend, Donna Isabella, and looked and lisped the part very mincingly. Charles Kemble’s Don Felix is one of his best parts. He raves, sighs, starts, frets, grows jealous, and relents, with all the characteristic spirit of an amorous hero; and in the drunken scene with old Don Lopez, where he produces his pistol as the marriage-contract, is particularly excellent and edifying. Fawcett played Lissardo as he plays almost every thing: he chattered like a magpie, and strutted like a crow in a gutter. But Emery’s Gibby was the thing: the genius of Scotland shone through his Highland plaid and broad bluff face: he seemed evidently afraid neither of having his voice heard, nor his face seen. In person he resembled the figure of the Highlander which we see stuck up as a sign at tobacconists’ windows. We never see nor wish to see better acting than this. Emery’s acting is indeed the most perfect imitation of common nature on the stage. Abbot was respectable as Colonel Briton. Mrs. Gibbs’s Flora was what every waiting-woman ought to be.

### VENICE PRESERVED

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, October 10, 1817.*

OTWAY’s noble tragedy of Venice Preserved was produced here last night. The effect upon the whole was not satisfactory. The novelties of the representation were Mr. H. Johnstone was Pierre, and Miss Campbell (from the Dublin Theatre) as Belvidera. Of Mr. Johnstone’s

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Pierre, after having seen Mr. Kemble in it, or even Mr. Young, we cannot speak in terms of applause. The character is not one of blunt energy, but of deep art. It is more sarcastic than fierce, and even the fierceness is more calculated to wound others than to shake or disturb himself. He is a master-mind, that plays with the foibles and passions of others and wields their energies to his dangerous purposes with conscious careless indifference. Mr. Johnstone was boisterous in his declamation, coarse in his irony, pompous and common-place in his action. Mr. Rae, as Jaffier, in the famous scene between these two characters, displayed some strong touches of nature and pathos. Miss Campbell, as Belvidera, did not altogether realize our idea of Otway's heroine; one of 'the most replenished sweet works of art or nature.' Her face, though not handsome, is not without expression; but its character is strength, rather than softness. In her person she is graceful, and has a mixture of dignity and ease in her general deportment. Her voice is powerful, but in its higher tones it rises too much into a scream, and in its gentler ones subsides into a lisp, which is more infantine than feminine. In her general style of acting she put us sometimes in mind of Mrs. Fawcitt, sometimes of Miss Somerville, and more than once of Miss O'Neill. Her delineation of the part, if not sufficiently tender or delicate, was however forcible, impassioned, and affecting. We thought the last scene, in which she goes mad, and digs for her murdered husband in the grave, the best. We should indeed give her the preference over Miss O'Neill in this very trying scene. Her expression of the disordered wanderings of the imagination, and of the last desperate struggles of passion in her bosom, both by the intonations of her voice, and the varying actions of her body, were more natural, and less repulsive than the mere physical violence of Miss O'Neill in the same passage. The play was given out for repetition with some marks of disapprobation from a part of the audience

### SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

*The Times.*

*Covent Garden, October 15, 1817.*

GOLDSMITH's comedy of *She Stoops to Conquer* was played at this theatre last night: its reception was highly favourable. It bears the stamp of the author's genius, which was an indefinable mixture of the original and imitative. His plot, characters, and incidents, are all new, and yet they are all old, with little variation or disguise—that is, the writer sedulously avoided common-place, and sought for singularity, but found it rather in the unhackneyed and out-of-the-way invention, of those who had gone before him than in his own stores. His Vicar

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of *Wakefield*, which abounds more than any of his works in delightful and original traits, is still very much borrowed from Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*. Again, the characters and adventures of *Tony Lumpkin* and his mother in the present comedy are a counterpart, even to the incident of the theft of the jewels, of those of the *Widow Blackacre* and her booby son in *Wycherley's Plain Dealer*. The change of character and the rustic disguise of *Miss Hardcastle*, by which she gains her lover, are also a faint imitation of *Letitia Hardy* in *The Belle's Stratagem*. This sort of plagiarism, which gives us a repetition of what are comparatively new and eccentric pictures of human life, is much to be preferred to the dull routine of trite, vapid, every-day common-places : but it is also more dangerous, as the stealing of pictures or family plate, where the goods are immediately identified, is surer of detection than the stealing of bank-notes or the current coin of the realm. Johnson's sarcasm against some writer that 'his singularity was not his excellence,' cannot be applied to *Goldsmith's* works in general : but we do not know whether it might not in severity be applied to *She Stoops to Conquer*. The incidents and characters are, some of them, exceedingly amusing ; but it is a little at the expense of probability and *bienveillance*. *Tony Lumpkin* is certainly a very essential, and unquestionably comic personage ; and his absurdities or his humours were very effectually portrayed by *Liston*. His impenetrability and unconscious confusion of mind and face in reading and spelling out the letter was admirable. *Charles Kemble's* bashful scene with his mistress was irresistibly ludicrous, and excellently well played : but still it did not quite overcome our incredulity as to the existence of such a character in such circumstances. It is a highly amusing caricature, a ridiculous fancy, but no more. One of the finest and most delicate touches of real acting we ever witnessed was in the transition of this modest gentleman's manner to the easy and agreeable tone of familiarity with the supposed chambermaid, which was not total and abrupt, but exactly such in kind and degree as such a character of natural reserve and constitutional timidity would undergo from the change of circumstances. *Miss Brunton's* *Miss Hardcastle* was a very correct and agreeable piece of acting. *Mrs. Davenport's* *Mrs. Hardcastle* was like her acting in all such characters, as good as it could possibly be.

### MR. KEAN'S MACBETH

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, October 21, 1817.*

*MACBETH* (with *Matthew Lock's* music) was played here last night. *Mr. Kean* was *Macbeth*, *Miss Campbell* *Lady Macbeth*. We never

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saw the former to such advantage in the part. Mr. Kean's Macbeth did not use to be a great favourite with us, except in the murder-scene: but he last night, we thought, lifted the general character to almost an equality with this single scene. At least, he played the whole in a style of boldness and grandeur which we have not seen before. He was 'proud and lion-hearted, and lacked fear.' A thousand hearts seemed swelling in his bosom. His voice rolled from the bottom of his breast like thunder, and his eye flashed scorching flame. Instead of going back (as some cunning critics who have been peeping out of their cells at him ever since he began his career, to watch for his first failure, and to fall upon him magnanimously at a disadvantage, have been predicting), he advances even beyond himself with manly steps and an heroic spirit. In the banquet-scene he was particularly excellent; and called forth, with complete effect, those deep tones of nature and passion, recoiling upon and bursting with a convulsive movement from the heart, which are his very best and surest resource, though he has as yet made the least use of them. Let him go on, and open all the sluices of passion in his breast which are yet unlocked. He has done much: let him do as much more, by giving as much depth of internal emotion (where it is required) as he has done of external vehemence, by adding stateliness and a measured march to infinite force and truth, that he may be the greatest poet, as he unquestionably is the greatest prose-actor of the stage. When we speak of him as deficient in these qualities, we only do so in comparison with Mrs. Siddons: it would be a mockery both of him and the public to compare him with any one else. But she had something of *divine* about her which Mr. Kean has not; he in general only shows us the utmost force of what is *human*. Of Miss Campbell's Lady Macbeth we are almost afraid to speak, because we cannot speak favourably of it; yet a failure in this part is by no means decisive against the general merits of an actress. But she was altogether too tame and drawling for Lady Macbeth; and some attempts at originality failed of effect from the timidity with which they were executed.

## THE BEGGAR'S OPERA

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, October 22, 1817.*

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA was played here last night to a crowded and brilliant audience. Miss Byrne's Polly was the chief attraction of the evening. She had excited very favourable expectations in the character of Adela in *The Haunted Tower*; and her representation of Polly—the charming, the tender, and innocent Polly—did not, we apprehend,

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disappoint the hopes of her friends. Her appearance was interesting, and had that expression of natural timidity which is one charm of the character. Her acting was not much ; but what there was of it, did not injure the effect of her singing, either by affectation or impropriety. In several of her songs she was enthusiastically and deservedly *encored*: particularly in that short delicious air of ‘He so teased me,’ she gave one clear note of fluttering ecstasy, which seemed as if her heart and voice together had suddenly burst prison, and mounted on the wings of joy, ‘as light as bird from brake.’ In the song, ‘My all’s in my possession,’ she also gave a considerable expression of eager and tumultuous delight. ‘Cease your funning’ was by no means her most successful effort : her execution was too laboured and full of perplexing digressions ; nor did her voice appear (as it should do) to repose on the sentiment and merely to float upon the simple music of the air, like the halcyon borne upon the undulating wave. Miss Kelly’s Lucy is admirable ; but it was (last night) an aggravation of her usual manner of doing it. She was a virago in body more than in mind ; and Macheath was apparently in more apprehension of her fists than of her spirit. Munden played Peachum with good emphasis and discretion, and put only one or two jokes upon the character. He should not have put any ; for Peachum is a grave personage ; solemn, didactic, and a man of business, rather than of pleasantry. Downton’s Lockett was good, but not his best. The battle-scene, about their mutual honesty, occasioned, with the disorder of cravats and tumbling of wigs, a good deal of boisterous mirth. Knight’s Filch was drunken and smoky ; but it was not the true Filch. Little Simmons is the only man who can play this precious character : all the rest are counterfeits.

### MR. KEAN’S OTHELLO

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, October 27, 1817.*

OTHELLO was played here on Saturday to a crowded house. There were two new appearances—Mr. Maywood as Iago, and a young lady as Desdemona. The name of this young *débutante* is not announced ; but her reception was exceedingly flattering. Her face is handsome, her person elegant, her voice sweet, and her general deportment graceful and easy. There was also a considerable portion of tenderness and delicacy of feeling in several of the passages ; but perhaps less than the character would bear. The only faults which we think it necessary to mention in her performance were, a too continual movement of the hands up and down, and sometimes a monotonous cadence in the recitation of the blank verse. Mr. Maywood’s Iago had some

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of the faults which we have noticed in his former characters ; but in the most trying scenes in the third act with Othello, we thought him exceedingly happy and successful. His conception was just, and his execution effective. There was a cold stillness in his manner which was more frightful than the expression of the most inveterate malignity. He seemed to crawl and watch for his prey like the spider, instead of darting upon it like the serpent. In the commencement of the part his timidity appeared to prevent him from doing justice to his intention, and once or twice his voice grew loud and unmanageable, so as to excite some marks of disapprobation. Mr. Kean's Othello is, we suppose, the finest piece of acting in the world. It is impossible either to describe or praise it adequately. We have never seen any actor so wrought upon, so 'perplexed in the extreme.' The energy of passion, as it expresses itself in action, is not the most terrific part ; it is the agony of his soul, showing itself in looks and tones of voice. In one part, where he listens in dumb despair to the fiend-like insinuations of Iago, he presented the very face, the marble aspect of Dante's Count Ugolino. On his fixed eyelids 'Horror sat plumed.' In another part, where a gleam of hope or of tenderness returns to subdue the tumult of his passions, his voice broke in faltering accents from his over-charged breast. His lips might be said less to utter words, than to bleed drops of blood gushing from his heart. An instance of this was in his pronunciation of the line 'Of one that loved not wisely but too well.' The whole of this last speech was indeed given with exquisite force and beauty. We only object to the virulence with which he delivers the last line, and with which he stabs himself—a virulence which Othello would neither feel against himself at that moment, nor against the turbaned Turk (whom he had slain) at such a distance of time. His exclamation on seeing his wife, 'I cannot think but Desdemona's honest,' was 'the glorious triumph of exceeding love ;' a thought flashing conviction on his mind, and irradiating his countenance with joy, like sudden sunshine. In fact, almost every scene or sentence in this extraordinary exhibition is a masterpiece of natural passion. The convulsed motion of the hands, and the involuntary swellings of the veins of the forehead in some of the most painful situations, should not only suggest topics of critical panegyric, but might furnish studies to the painter or anatomist.

### MISS BRUNTON'S BEATRICE

*The Times.*

*Covent Garden, November 29, 1817.*

MISS BRUNTON appeared last night as Beatrice, in *Much Ado about Nothing*. This, to say the least of it, was a very bold undertaking. This

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lady has hitherto confined her efforts to a certain range of characters, which, though the principal ones in the pieces to which they belong, constitute a subordinate walk of the drama. Here she was received with some applause, and was gradually acquiring popularity ; but the distance between all this and Beatrice was infinite ; it was a leap not to be taken in the dark, an attempt not to be made without full consideration, without carefully weighing the nature of the public expectation, the means we possess of comparison, our early prepossessions, and the difficulty of conveying even a tolerable idea of this character. Beatrice is in truth a noble creature ; all that she says and does is referable to an innate sense of power, a superiority to those about her, a dignity of manner that is never compromised, and an insight into character which tells her, in her most sarcastic moods, how far she may go with safety. The different situations in which she is placed finely develop the formation of her mind : she is no hypocrite ; her temper is open, warm, and unsuspecting : when she believes that she is really loved, she does not trifle with the passion she has raised, and in her grief and indignation at the fate of her unfortunate friend, forgets her power, her love, and all the world besides. Miss Brunton is not equal either in conception or execution to the delineation of such a being. In the first scene, she addresses the messenger with the familiarity of an equal ; her confession of love wanted that ease and frankness which is the essence of the character ; and in the scene where her friend is falsely accused, was far too slow in discovering that emotion and indignation which so naturally result from the situation. She is perpetually introducing a sort of giggle, one can hardly call it a laugh, without any authority from the text or from the substance of the text, which is quite out of keeping ; and in the conclusion of the scene, where she has persuaded Benedick to revenge the fate of Hero, when grief should have full possession of her mind, she flippantly, and in a transport of joy, with the like disregard of authority, calls him back to kiss her hand again. We regret the necessity of making these observations, but we shall always on such occasions deliver our sentiments freely, and above all shall take care that such high ground is not occupied, without strictly scrutinizing the pretensions of those who place themselves there. We are very far, too, from meaning to convey an unfavourable impression of Miss Brunton's general powers ; it is possible for great merit to fail in Beatrice. Charles Kemble was successful in Benedick : we do not think the present state of the dramatic art could furnish a better representative of that character. Emery's performance of Dogberry does him great credit ; it was not at all caricatured, as we have too often seen it, but was quite within the truth : we have seldom witnessed the *vis comica* in a more genuine state. Miss Foote gave much interest to the part of Hero ;

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her appeal to her father in the scene where she is falsely accused was forcible and affecting. With all the faults which attend the getting up of this play, we must not forget that it is Shakespeare's, and that an evening passed in hearing one of his plays, especially when given, as at present, nearly in its genuine state, must yield a considerable degree of pleasure.

### MR. KEAN AND MISS O'NEILL

*The Times.*

*Covent Garden, December 2, 1817.*

THE tragedy of *Venice Preserved* was acted here last night to rather an empty house. Mr. Young's *Pierre* is one of his very best and most spirited performances. Mr. C. Kemble did to the character of Jaffier all the justice it deserves. But the great attraction of this piece, as it is at present acted, is Miss O'Neill's *Belvidera*. In this, however, we think her less excellent than on her first appearance in it. Her pathos is less simple, less touching, and her action more outrageous and violent. Perhaps the reason of this change may be, that, acting in such parts from an impulse of real sympathy with the heroine, as she repeats the character, her immediate interest in it becomes gradually diminished, and she is compelled to make up for the want of genuine feeling by the external vehemence of her manner. Be this as it may, she at present carries this violence of manner to the utmost pitch at which it can be borne. Her screams almost torture the ear, her looks almost petrify the sight. It is time that she should return to her first style of acting, which did not 'o'erstep the modesty of nature.' We speak thus of her from a sense of justice, and of respect, not of contempt, for her powers: for we think she owes it to those powers *not to abuse them*. As *Belvidera* is one of her most prominent characters, we shall take this opportunity to sum up in a few words our opinion of her general merit as a tragic actress; and perhaps we shall be able to do this best by pointing out the difference between her and another celebrated performer of the day.

Mr. Kean affects the audience from the force of passion rather than of sentiment, or subsides into the pathetic after the violence of action, but seldom rises into it from the depth of natural feeling. In this respect, he presents almost a direct contrast to Miss O'Neill. Her energy appears to rise out of her sensibility: distress takes possession of, and overwhelms, her faculties: she triumphs in her weakness, and vanquishes by yielding. Mr. Kean is chiefly great in the conflict of passions, and resistance to his fate—in the opposition of his will to circumstances—in the keen excitement of his under-

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standing. It is not without some reluctance, and after a good deal of reflection, that we should say, that the finest parts of his acting are superior to the finest parts of hers : for instance, to her parting with Jaffier in *Belvidera*,—to her terror and joy in meeting with Biron in *Isabella*,—to the death-scene in the same character,—and to the scene in the prison with her husband as Mrs. Beverley. Her acting is more correct, equable, and faultless throughout than Mr. Kean's, and it is also quite as overpowering at the time, in the most impassioned parts ; but it does not leave the same impression on the mind afterwards. It adds little to the stock of our ideas, or to our materials for reflection, but passes away with the momentary illusion of the scene. And this difference of effect perhaps arises from the difference of the parts they have to sustain on the stage. In the female characters which Miss O'Neill plays, the distress is in a great measure physical and involuntary, or such as is common to every woman in similar circumstances. She abandons herself to the impulses of grief or tenderness, and revels in the excess of an uncontrollable affliction. She can call to her aid with perfect propriety and the greatest effect, all the weaknesses of her sex ; tears, sighs, convulsive sobs, shrieks, death-like stupefaction, and laughter more terrible than all : but it is not the same in the parts which Mr. Kean has to act. There must here be a manly fortitude, as well as a natural sensibility. There must be a restraint constantly put upon the feelings by the understanding and the will. He must in part be 'as one in suffering all, who suffers nothing.' He cannot give way entirely to his situation or his feelings, but must endeavour to become master of them and of himself. This, in our conception, must make it more easy to give the utmost effect and interest to female characters on the stage, by rendering the expression of the passion more simple, obvious, and natural ; and must also make them less rememberable afterwards, by leaving less scope for the exercise of intellect, and for the distinct and complicated reaction of the character upon circumstances. At least, we can only account in some such way for the different impression which the acting of these two admired performers makes on our minds, when we see or when we think of them. As critics, we particularly feel this. Mr. Kean affords a never-failing source of observation and discussion : we can only praise or blame Miss O'Neill. The peculiarity and the strong hold of Mrs. Siddons's acting was, that she in a wonderful degree united both the extremes of excellence here spoken of, that is, the natural frailties of passion, or its inarticulate and involuntary expression, with a commanding strength of intellect, and the loftiest flights of imagination. Her person could also endure more violence of action than Miss O'Neill's ; whose tender frame is hardly able to 'abide the beating of so strong a

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passion,' as she often has to assume, and whose fair face is injured by the least distortion.

### THE HONEY MOON

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, December 3, 1817.*

THE favourite comedy of the Honey Moon was performed here last night; the part of the Duke by Mr. H. Johnston. Upon the whole he acquitted himself well in it, with spirit and effect. More than that the character does not require; and it would be hard if the critic required of the actor what the poet has not clearly and intelligibly exacted from him. When, indeed, an accomplished performer, who happens to be a man of genius, lends additional graces to a character, and places it in a brilliant light of his own, we are bound to thank him: when he merely gives 'what is set down for him' with force and fidelity, we are bound to be content. Mr. Johnston we thought sometimes too coarse, and sometimes too sarcastic; but in this sort of assumption of character, it is hard to say exactly how far the habitual manners and sentiments are to modify and appear through those which are put on to answer the purpose of the moment. In this species of the *mock-heroic*, which is a sort of equivocal mixture of comedy and tragedy, half pompous and half playful, Elliston, who was the first Duke Aranza, excelled all those who have succeeded him. 'Plautus was too light, Seneca was too heavy for him.' He just aspired to something above comedy, he just fell short of tragedy; but *he hit the stage between wind and water*. Mr. H. Johnston's energy is more fierce, his irony more virulent: but still he moved, and looked, and spoke, if not like a lord, like a very lordly husband, and gave the essential interest to the part. He danced much at his ease, and recited the speech in which the Duke describes his idea of what his wife's dress should be, with propriety and feeling. Knight's countryman was admirable: his hysteric laughter at the dispute between his host and hostess, and his sheepish confusion when discovered, were equally perfect. His wonder at the manner in which Johnston rates his wife was ecstatic:

'And near him sat ecstatic Wonder,  
Listening the hoarse applauding thunder.'

His jaws relaxed to their utmost expansion, and his nose 'grew sharp as a pen.' Miss Kelly was too pert and forward, and too much like my lady's chambermaid. Nor can we speak in praise of Mrs. Davison's Juliana. She pouts, flounces, and lumbers about the stage strangely. Mr. Harley did the Mock Duke well; he

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seemed like Sancho Panza in his government. The Honey Moon is a very pleasing drama: it is a cento of passages from old plays modernized; it is an ingenious plagiarism from beginning to end. The author was a most incorrigible pilferer, but so expert in his art, that we would say to other authors, 'Go thou and do likewise!'

### OUTWITTED AT LAST

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, Dec. 15, 1817.*

THE new comic Opera of Outwitted at Last, which has been for some time in preparation here, was brought out on Saturday. It set out very auspiciously, and ended very flatly. In the beginning there was a pair of happy lovers, and a couple of very pretty songs by Miss Cubitt and Miss Byrne, the latter of which was sung with much spirit, and the former with correctness, and both of them were *encored*; and there was also a duet and a dance between Harley and Mrs. Alsop (as an intriguing serving-man and an arch waiting-gentlewoman), which was *encored* no less deservedly and cordially. Both of these performers are exceedingly gay and lively, and are always greeted by the audience on their first coming on, because they themselves seem glad to claim acquaintance with them once more. We dare swear that Harley in particular is always sorry when the play is over; he plays with the same good-will as if it was his own benefit every night. Mrs. Alsop bounces on and off the stage, and trundles her little person about with so much vivacity, that she becomes fascinating from her very awkwardness, and 'makes defect perfection.' Oxberry, too, showed off to some advantage by the very singular airs he gave himself as an insolent affected fop of a servant. But here our encomiums must end. The rest of the play was down-hill work. Pope moralised. Harry Johnston was ranting, but not without pathos. Powell, dressed in black, preached over an executorship. Mr. T. Cooke clipped his words too much. Dowton was a Commodore, and little Smith was his Boatswain. Enough! enough! We are heartily sick of sentiment distilled from salt water; we have no sympathy with the tender sighs of these hearts of oak. Woe to the poor author who relies on such worn-out common-places. A broadside of clap-traps poured in upon the audience from a British man-of-war, though Smith mans the guns, and Dowton stands with his cane in his hand and his cocked hat all on one side, has no more effect than so much waste paper. Dowton is an excellent actor, even at his worst; but we do not see why he should poke his stick in every one's ribs that he comes near. He at last grew quite offensive with his sea phrases and outlandish allusions; and, in

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his person, the Genius of the Ocean might be said to be almost hooted off the stage. The piece was given out for a second representation on Tuesday with marked opposition.

### MR. KEAN'S RETURN

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, December 16, 1817.*

MR. KEAN, after an absence of nearly six weeks, owing to serious indisposition, last night resumed his professional duties at this theatre, in the arduous character of Richard the Third. He was received on his appearance with all that warm greeting and enthusiastic applause, which are perhaps the highest meed of histrionic talent, and which are unfailingly called forth by this distinguished actor, after every suspension, however short, of the exercise of his art. This expression of good-will was increased, we think, in the present instance, by the recollection that the privation was caused by illness, and that it was possible the stage might have been deprived of one of its greatest ornaments. The acclamations, the waving of hats and handkerchiefs, continued for some minutes. Mr. Kean looks somewhat thinner than before his indisposition, but betrayed no deficiency of power; on the contrary, on account probably of our having for some time past been doomed to witness very inferior performances, he appeared to surpass himself. He exhibited all that energy and discrimination, that faculty of identifying himself with the character he represents, which is to be ranked among the greatest efforts of human talents; he realized our conceptions of a being whose soul

'Not Fate itself could awe.'

The fine passages of this piece of acting are well known to the public; to quote them would be to extract the whole play. The conclusion of his career was marked by nearly as much applause as the commencement. The theatre was well filled, notwithstanding the extreme wetness of the evening.

### KING JOHN

*The Times.*

*Covent Garden, December 18, 1817.*

SHAKESPEARE's tragedy of King John was acted last night at this theatre. Miss O'Neill performed the part of Constance; and though everything undertaken by this excellent actress must have a large proportion of good in it, we think that she is less successful in

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this than in most of her other characters : for this, physical causes, her youth for example, may be assigned ; and her perfect delineation of Constance is, perhaps, reserved to the maturity of her age and her talents. She did not convey to us that warmth of temper, that susceptibility to grief and anger, which mark this injured Princess. Her speeches on the conclusion of the marriage with Blanch, which admit great variety of expression, were simple declamation, without passion and nearly in the same tone : but we would rather dwell on beauties than defects. Two or three lines at the end of the scene just mentioned made amends for all ; when she says,

‘ To me, and to the state of my great grief,  
Let kings assemble.’

she utters the passage with beautiful feeling, and leaves nothing to be wished. The burst of indignation when Austria endeavours to silence her, subsiding instantly into a tone of the keenest contempt, was no less striking. Her very best effort was on quitting the stage, when, having uttered those pathetic exclamations for the loss of her son, she goes out in all the wildness of despair, as if occupied by no other thought than to seek him through the world. Young was a little too violent in some parts of the character of King John ; but, on the whole, it may be considered a fine piece of acting : the two scenes with Hubert, and his dying scene, were excellent. Faulconbridge, the bastard, is one of Charles Kemble’s happiest hits ; his manly figure, and martial appearance, well bear him out in his scoffs as the Duke of Austria ; he is no sooner knighted, than he seems made for his rank, and leads out Queen Elinor like a ‘ lordly gallant.’ Some of the nobles of John’s court did not convey the idea of much dignity either in their dress or persons : we wish that the managers, who have the power of issuing patents of nobility at pleasure, would consider whether the general effect might not be improved by a little more attention to this point.

### MR. KEAN’S LUKE

*The Times.*

*Drury Lane, Dec. 19, 1817.*

MR. KEAN appeared last night as Luke, in the play of *Riches ; or, the Wife and Brother*. His performance of this character, and the general merits of the play in which it is the principal feature, are too well known to leave much room for observation. The part has not much dash or show about it, but requires the hand of a skilful master to draw it out, and to make the design of the author intelligible. The finest

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part of the action is the unexpected appearance of Luke's brother, Sir John Traffic, whom he had supposed dead, and with whose riches he was revelling and playing the tyrant. This is in Mr. Kean's best manner, and makes an impression which can never be forgotten. Mrs. Alsop was very successful in Lady Traffic; she seemed quite at home in the old comedy, and delivered her blank verse with 'good emphasis and good discretion.'

### THE DRAMA: No. I

*The London Magazine.*

*January, 1820.*

IN commencing our account of the drama for the year 1820, and turning our eye back, as far as our personal recollection reaches, towards the conclusion of the last century, we do not think we should be justified, by the customary topics of comparison, or privileges of criticism, in making a general complaint of the degeneracy of the stage. Within our remembrance, at least, it has not fallen off to any alarming degree, either in the written or the acted performances. It has changed its style considerably in both these respects, but it does not follow that it has altogether deteriorated: it has shifted its ground, but has found its level. With respect to the pieces brought out, we have got striking melo-dramas for dull tragedies; and short farces are better than long ones of five acts. The *semper varium et mutabile* of the poet, may be transferred to the stage, 'the inconstant stage,' without losing the original felicity of the application:—it has its necessary ebbs and flows, from its subjection to the influence of popular feeling, and the frailty of the materials of which it is composed, its own fleeting and shadowy essence, and cannot be expected to remain for any great length of time stationary at the same point, either of perfection or debasement. Acting, in particular, which is the chief organ by which it addresses itself to the mind;—the eye, tongue, hand by which it dazzles, charms, and seizes on the public attention—is an art that seems to contain in itself the seeds of perpetual renovation and decay, following in this respect the order of nature rather than the analogy of the productions of human intellect,—for whereas in the other arts of painting and poetry, the standard works of genius, being permanent and accumulating, for awhile provoke emulation, but, in the end, overlay future efforts, and transmit only their defects to those that come after; the exertions of the greatest actor die with him, leaving to his successors only the admiration of his name, and the aspiration after imaginary excellence: so that in effect 'no one generation of actors binds another;' the art is always setting out afresh on the

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stock of genius and nature, and the success depends (generally speaking) on accident, opportunity, and encouragement. The harvest of excellence (whatever it may be) is removed from the ground every twenty or thirty years, by Death's sickle; and there is room left for another to sprout up and tower to an equal height, and spread into equal luxuriance—to 'dally with the wind, and court the sun'—according to the health and vigour of the stem, and the favourableness of the season. But books, pictures, remain like fixtures in the public mind; beyond a certain point incurber the soil of living truth and nature; and distort or stunt the growth of original genius. Again, the literary amateur may find employment for his time in reading old authors only, and exhaust his entire spleen in scouting new ones: but the lover of the stage cannot amuse himself, in his solitary fastidiousness, by sitting to witness a play got up by the departed ghosts of first-rate actors; or be contented with the perusal of a collection of old play-bills:—he may extol Garrick, but he must go to see Kean; and, in his own defence, must admire or at least tolerate what he sees, or stay away against his will. The theatrical critic may grumble a little, at first, at a new candidate for the favour of the town, and say how much better the part must have been done formerly by some actor whom he never saw; but by degrees he makes a virtue of necessity, and submits to be pleased 'with coy, reluctant, amorous delay'—devoting his attention to the actual stage as he would to a living mistress, whom he selects as a matter of course from the beauties of the present, and not from those of the last age! We think there is for this reason less pedantry and affectation (though not less party-feeling and personal prejudice) in judging of the stage than of most other subjects; and we feel a sort of theoretical, as well as instinctive predilection for the faces of *play-going* people as among the most sociable, gossiping, good-natured, and humane members of society. In this point of view, as well as in others, the stage is a test and school of humanity. We do not much like any person or persons who do not like plays; and for this reason, viz. that we imagine they cannot much like themselves or any one else. The really humane man (except in cases of unaccountable prejudices, which we do not think the most likely means to increase or preserve the natural amiableness of his disposition) is prone to the study of humanity. *Omnes boni et liberales HUMANITATI semper favemus.* He likes to see it brought home from the universality of precepts and general terms, to the reality of persons, of tones, and actions; and to have it raised from the grossness and familiarity of sense, to the lofty but striking platform of the imagination. He likes to see the face of man with the veil of time torn

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from it, and to feel the pulse of nature beating in all times and places alike. The smile of good-humoured surprise at folly, the tear of pity at misfortune, do not misbecome the face of man or woman. It is something delightful and instructive, to have seen Coriolanus or King John in the habiliments of Mr. Kemble, to have shaken hands almost with Othello in the person of Mr. Kean, to have cowered before the spirit of Lady Macbeth in the glance of Mrs. Siddons. The stage at once gives a body to our thoughts, and refinement and expansion to our sensible impressions. It has not the pride and remoteness of abstract science: it has not the petty egotism of vulgar life. It is particularly wanted in great cities (where it of course flourishes most) to take off from the dissatisfaction and *ennui*, that creep over our own pursuits from the indifference or contempt thrown upon them by others; and at the same time to reconcile our numberless discordant incommensurable feelings and interests together, by giving us an immediate and common topic to engage our attention, and to rally us round the standard of our common humanity. We never hate a face that we have seen in the pit: and Liston's laugh would be a cordial to wash down the oldest animosity of the most inveterate pit-critics.

The only drawback on the felicity and triumphant self-complacency of a play-goer's life, arises from the shortness of life itself. We miss the favourites, not of another age, but of our own—the idols of our youthful enthusiasm; and we cannot replace them by others. It does not shew that *these* are worse, because they are different from *those*: though they had been better, they would not have been so good to us. It is the penalty of our nature, from Adam downwards: so Milton makes our first ancestor exclaim,—

—'Should God create  
Another Eve, and I another rib afford,  
Yet loss of thee would never from my heart.'

We offer our best affections, our highest aspirations after the good and beautiful, on the altar of youth: it is well if, in our after-age, we can sometimes rekindle the almost extinguished flame, and inhale its dying fragrance like the breath of incense, of sweet-smelling flowers and gums, to detain the spirit of life, the ethereal guest, a little longer in its frail abode—to cheer and soothe it with the pleasures of memory, not with those of hope. While we can do this, life is worth living for: when we can do it no longer, its spring will soon go down, and we had better not be!—Who shall give us Mrs. Siddons again, but in a waking dream, a beatific vision of past years, crowned with other hopes and other feelings, whose

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pomp is also faded, and their glory and their power gone! Who shall in our time (or can ever to the eye of fancy) fill the stage, like her, with the dignity of their persons, and the emanations of their minds? Or who shall sit majestic in the throne of tragedy—a Goddess, a prophetess and a Muse—from which the lightning of her eye flashed o'er the mind, startling its inmost thoughts—and the thunder of her voice circled through the labouring breast, rousing deep and scarce known feelings from their slumber? Who shall stalk over the stage of horrors, its presiding genius, or 'play the hostess,' at the banquetting scene of murder? Who shall walk in sleepless extacy of soul, and haunt the mind's eye ever after, with the dread pageantry of suffering and of guilt? Who shall make tragedy once more stand with its feet upon the earth, and with its head raised above the skies, weeping tears and blood? That loss is not to be repaired. While the stage lasts, there will never be another Mrs. Siddons! Tragedy seemed to set with her; and the rest are but blazing comets or fiery exhalations.—It is pride and happiness enough for us to have lived at the same time with her, and one person more! But enough on this subject. Those feelings that we are most anxious to do justice to, are those to which it is impossible we ever should!

To turn to something less serious. We have not the same pomp of tragedy nor the same gentility, variety, and correctness in comedy. There was the gay, fluttering, hair-brained Lewis; he that was called 'Gentleman Lewis,'—all life, and fashion, and volubility, and whim; the greatest comic *mannerist* that perhaps ever lived; whose head seemed to be in his heels, and his wit at his fingers' ends: who never let the stage stand still, and made your heart light and your head giddy with his infinite vivacity, and bustle, and hey-day animal spirits. We wonder how Death ever caught him in his mad, whirling career, or ever fixed his volatile spirit in a dull *caput mortuum* of dust and ashes? Nobody could break open a door, or jump over a table, or scale a ladder, or twirl a cocked hat, or dangle a cane, or play a jockey-nobleman, or a nobleman's jockey, like him. He was at Covent Garden. With him was Quick, who made an excellent self-important, busy, strutting money-getting citizen; or crusty old guardian, in a brown suit and a bob wig. There was also Munden, who was as good an actor then, as he is now; and Fawcett, who was at that time a much better one than he is at present. He, of late, seems to slur over his parts, wishes to merge the actor in the manager, and is grown serious before retiring from the stage. But a few years back (when he ran the race of popularity with Jack Bannister) nobody could give the *view holla* of a fox-hunting country squire like him; and he sung

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AMO AMAS, as Lingo in the Agreeable Surprise, in a style of pathos to melt the heart of the young apprentices in the two shilling gallery. But he appears to have grown averse to his profession, and indifferent to the applause he might acquire himself, and to the pleasures he used to give to others. In turbulent and pragmatistical characters, and in all that cast of parts which may be called the *slang* language of comedy, he hardly had his equal. Perhaps he might consider this walk of his art as beneath his ambition; but, in our judgment, whatever a man can do best, is worth his doing. At the same house was little Simmons, who remained there till lately, like a veteran at his post, till he fell down a flight of steps and broke his neck, without any one's seeming to know or care about the matter. Though one of those 'who had gladdened life,' his death by no means 'eclipsed the gaiety of nations.' The public are not grateful. They make an effort of generosity, collect all their reluctant admiration into a heap, and offer it up with servile ostentation at the shrine of some great name, which they think reflects back its lustre on the worshippers. Or, like fashionable creditors, they pay their debts of honour for the *éclat* of the thing, and neglect the claims of humbler but sterling merit; such as was that of Simmons, one of the most correct, pointed, *naïve*, and whimsical comic actors, we have for a long time had, or are likely to have again. He was not a buffoon, but a real actor. He did not play *himself*, nor play tricks, but played the part the author had assigned him. This was the great merit of the good old style of acting. He fitted into it like a brilliant into the setting of a ring, or as the ring fits the finger. We shall look for him often in Filch, in which his appearance was a continual *double entendre*, with one eye leering at his neighbour's pockets, and the other turned to the gallows:—also in the spangled Beau Mordecai, in Moses, in which he had all the precision, the pragmatisticalness, and impenetrable secrecy of the Jew money-lender; and in my Lord Sands, where he had all the stage to himself, and seemed to fill it by the singular insignificance of his person, and the infinite airs he gave himself. We shall look for him in these and many other parts, but in vain, or for any one equal to him.

At the other house, there was King, whose acting left a taste on the palate, sharp and sweet like a quince; with an old, hard, rough, withered face, like a John-apple, puckered up into a thousand wrinkles; with shrewd hints and tart replies; 'with nods and becks and wreathed smiles;' who was the real amorous, wheedling, or hasty, choleric, peremptory old gentleman in Sir Peter Teazle and Sir Anthony Absolute; and the true, that is, the pretended, clown in Touchstone, with wit sprouting from his head like a pair of ass's

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ears, and folly perched on his cap like the horned owl. There was Parsons too, whom we just remember like a worn-out 'suit of office' in Elbow; and Dodd in Acres, who had the most extraordinary way of hitching in a meaning, or subsiding into blank folly with the best grace in nature; and whose courage seemed literally to ooze out of his fingers in the preparations for the duel. There was Suett, the delightful old croaker, the everlasting Dicky Gossip of the stage; and, with him, Jack Bannister, whose gaiety, good humour, cordial feeling, and natural spirits, shone through his characters, and lighted them up like a transparency. Bannister did not go out of himself to take possession of his part, but put it on over his ordinary dress, like a *surtout*, snug, warm, and comfortable. He let his personal character appear through; and it was one great charm of his acting. In Lenitive, in the Prize, when the beau is ingrafted on the apothecary, he came out of his shell like the aurelia out of the grub; and surely never lighted on the stage, which he hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision—gilding and cheering the motley sphere he just began to move in—shining like a gilded pill, fluttering like a piece of gold-leaf, gaudy as a butterfly, loud as a grasshopper, full of life, and laughter, and joy. His Scrub, in which he spouts a torrent of home-brewed ale against the ceiling, in a sudden fit of laughter at the waggeries of his brother Martin;—his Son-in-law; his part in the Grandmother; his Autolycus; his Colonel Feignwell; and his Walter in the Children in the Wood, were all admirable. Most of his characters were exactly fitted for him—for his good-humoured smile, his buoyant activity, his kind heart, and his honest face: and no one else could do them so well, because no one else could play Jack Bannister. He was, some time since, seen casting a wistful eye at Drury-lane theatre, and no doubt thinking of past times: others who also cast a wistful eye at it, do not forget him when they think of old and happy times! There were Bob and Jack Palmer, the Brass and Dick of the Confederacy; the one the pattern of an elder, the other of a younger brother. There was Wewitzer, the trustiest of Swiss valets, and the most 'secret Tattle' of the stage. There was, and there still is, Irish Johnstone, with his supple knees, his hat twisted round in his hand, his good-humoured laugh, his arched eye-brows, his insinuating leer, and his lubricated *brogue*, curling round the ear like a well-oiled mustachio. These were all the men. Then there was Miss Farren, with her fine-lady airs and graces, with that elegant turn of her head, and motion of her fan, and tripping of her tongue; and Miss Pope, the very picture of a Duenna, a maiden lady, or an antiquated dowager—the latter spring of beauty, the second childhood

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of vanity, more quaint, fantastic, and old-fashioned, more pert, frothy, and light-headed than any thing that can be imagined; embalmed in the follies, preserved in the spirit of affectation of the last age:—and then add to these, Mrs. Jordan, the child of nature, whose voice was a cordial to the heart, because it came from it, rich, full, like the luscious juice of the ripe grape; to hear whose laugh was to drink nectar; whose smile ‘made a sunshine,’ not ‘in the shady place,’ but amidst dazzling lights and in glad theatres:—who ‘talked far above singing,’ and whose singing was like the twang of Cupid’s bow. Her person was large, soft, and generous like her soul. It has been attempted to compare Miss Kelly to her. There is no comparison. Miss Kelly is a shrewd, clever, arch, lively girl; tingles all over with suppressed sensibility; licks her lips at mischief, bites her words in two, or lets a sly meaning out of the corners of her eyes; is fidgetty with curiosity, or unable to stand still for spite:—she is always uneasy and always interesting; but Mrs. Jordan was all exuberance and grace, ‘her bounty was as boundless as the sea; her love as deep.’ It was her capacity for enjoyment, and the contrast she presented to every thing sharp, angular, and peevish, that communicated the same genial heartfelt satisfaction to the spectator. Her Nell, for instance, was right royal like her liquor, and wrapped up in measureless content with lambs’ wool. Miss Kelly is a dexterous knowing chambermaid: Mrs. Jordan had nothing dexterous or knowing about her. She was Cleopatra turned into an oyster-wench, without knowing that she was Cleopatra, or caring that she was an oyster-wench. An oyster-wench, such as she was, would have been equal to a Cleopatra; and an Antony would not have deserted her for the empire of the world!

From the favourite actors of a few years back, we turn to those of the present day: and we shall speak of them, not with grudging or stinted praise.

The first of these in tragedy is Mr. Kean. To show that we do not conceive that tragedy regularly declines in every successive generation, we shall say, that we do not think there has been in our remembrance any tragic performer (with the exception of Mrs. Siddons) equal to Mr. Kean. Nor, except in voice and person, and the conscious ease and dignity naturally resulting from those advantages, do we know that even Mrs. Siddons was greater. In truth of nature and force of passion, in discrimination and originality, we see no inferiority to any one on the part of Mr. Kean: but there is an insignificance of figure, and a hoarseness of voice, that necessarily *vulgarize*, or diminish our idea of the characters he plays: and perhaps to this may be added, a want of a certain correspondent

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elevation and magnitude of thought, of which Mrs. Siddons's noble form seemed to be only the natural mould and receptacle. Her nature seemed always above the circumstances with which she had to struggle: her soul to be greater than the passion labouring in her breast. Grandeur was the cradle in which her genius was rocked: for *her* to be, was to be sublime! She did the greatest things with child-like ease: her powers seemed never tasked to the utmost, and always as if she had inexhaustible resources still in reserve. The least word she uttered seemed to float to the end of the stage: the least motion of her hand seemed to command awe and obedience. Mr. Kean is all effort, all violence, all extreme passion: he is possessed with a fury, a demon that leaves him no repose, no time for thought, or room for imagination. He perhaps screws himself up to as intense a degree of feeling as Mrs. Siddons, strikes home with as sure and as hard a blow as she did, but he does this by straining every nerve, and winding up every faculty to this single point alone: and as he does it by an effort himself, the spectator follows him by an effort also. Our sympathy in a manner ceases with the actual impression, and does not leave the same grand and permanent image of itself behind. His Othello furnishes almost the only exception to these remarks. The solemn and beautiful manner in which he pronounces the farewell soliloquy, is worth all gladiatorship and pantomime in the world. His Sir Giles is his most equal and energetic character: but it is too equal, too energetic from the beginning to the end. There is no reason that he should have the same eagerness, the same *impetus* at the commencement as at the close of his career: he should not have the fierceness of the wild beast till he is goaded to madness by the hunters. Sir Giles Mompesson (supposed to be the original character) we dare say, took things more quietly, and only grew desperate with his fortunes. Cooke played the general casting of the character better in this respect: but without the same fine breaks and turns of passion. Cooke indeed, compared to Kean, had only the *slang* and *bravado* of tragedy. Neither can we think Mr. Kemble equal to him, with all his study, his grace, and classic dignity of form. He was the statue of perfect tragedy, not the living soul. Mrs. Siddons combined the advantage of form and other organic requisites with nature and passion: Mr. Kemble has the external requisites (at least of face and figure), without the internal workings of the soul: Mr. Kean has the last without the first, and, if we must make our election between the two, we think the *vis tragica* must take precedence of every thing else. Mr. Kean, in a word, appears to us a test, an *experimentum crucis*, to shew the triumph of genius over physical

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defects, of nature over art, of passion over affectation, and of originality over common-place monotony.—Next to Mr. Kean, the greatest tragic performer now on the stage is undoubtedly Miss O'Neill. She cannot take rank by the side of her great predecessor, but neither can any other actress be at all compared with her. If we had not seen Mrs. Siddons, we should not certainly have been able to conceive any thing finer than some of her characters, such as Belvidera, Isabella in the Fatal Marriage, Mrs. Beverly, and Mrs. Haller, which (as she at first played them) in tenderness of sensibility, and the simple force of passion, could not be surpassed. She has, however, of late, carried the expression of mental agony and distress to a degree of physical horror that is painful to behold, and which is particularly repulsive in a person of her delicacy of frame and truly feminine appearance.—Mrs. Bunn is a beautiful and interesting actress in the sentimental drama; and in the part of Queen Elizabeth, in Schiller's Tragedy of Mary Stuart, which she played lately, gave, in the agitation of her form, the distracted thoughts painted in her looks, and the deep but fine and mellow tones of her voice, earnest of higher excellence than she has yet displayed. Her voice is one of the finest on the stage. It resembles the deep murmur of a hive of bees in spring-tide, and the words drop like honey from her lips.—Mr. Macready is, in our opinion, a truly spirited and impassioned declaimer, with a noble voice, and great fervour of manner; but, we apprehend, his *forte* is rather in giving a loose to the tide of enthusiastic feeling or sentiment, than in embodying individual character, or discriminating the diversity of the passions. There is a gaiety and tip-toe elevation in his personal deportment, which Mr. Kean has not, but in other more essential points there is no room for competition. Of his Coriolanus and Richard, we may have to speak in detail hereafter.

We shall conclude this introductory sketch with a few words on the comic actors. Emery at Covent Garden might be said to be the best *provincial* actor on the London boards. In his line of rustic characters he is a perfect actor. He would be a bold critic who should undertake to show that in his own walk Emery ever did any thing wrong. His Hodge is an absolute reality; and his Lockitt is as sullen, as gloomy, and impenetrable as the prison walls of which he is the keeper. His Robert Tyke is the sublime of tragedy in low life.—Mr. Liston has more comic humour, more power of face, and a more genial and happy vein of folly, than any other actor we remember. His farce is not caricature: his drollery oozes out of his features, and trickles down his face: his voice is a pitch-pipe for laughter. He does some characters but indifferently,

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others respectably; but when he *puts himself whole* into a jest, it is unrivalled.—Munden, with all his merit, his whim, his imagination, and with his broad effects, is a caricaturist in the comparison. He distorts his features to the utmost stretch of grimace, and trolls his voice about with his tongue in the most extraordinary manner, but he does all this with an evident view to the audience: whereas Liston's style of acting is the unconscious and involuntary; he indulges his own risibility or absurd humours to please himself, and the odd noises he makes come from him as naturally as the bleating of a sheep.—Elliston is an actor of great merit, and of a very agreeable class: there is a joyousness in his look, his voice, and manner; he treads the stage as if it was his 'best-found, and latest as well as earliest choice;' writes himself comedian in any book, warrant, or acquittance; hits the town between wind and water, between farce and tragedy; touches the string of a mock heroic sentiment with due pathos and vivacity; and makes the best strolling gentleman, or needy poet, on the stage. His Rover is excellent: so is his Duke in the Honeymoon; and in Matrimony he is best of all.—Downton is a genuine and excellent comedian; and, in speaking of his Major Sturgeon, we cannot pass over, in disdainful silence, Russell's Jerry Sneak, and Mrs. Harlowe's Miss Molly Jollop. Oxberry is an actor of a strong rather than of a pleasant comic vein (his Mawworm is particularly emphatical). Harley pleases others, for he seems pleased himself; and little Knight, in the simplicity and good nature of the country lad, is inimitable.

Of the particular parts in which these and other performers display their talents to advantage, we must speak in future articles on this subject; as well as of the merits of the modern drama itself; the management of our theatres; and a variety of other topics, to which we propose to give the best attention in our power—determined neither to 'extenuate, nor set down aught in malice.'

### THE DRAMA: No. II

*The London Magazine.*

*February, 1820.*

SINCE we wrote a former article on this subject, the stage has lost one of its principal ornaments and fairest supports, in the person of Miss O'Neill. As Miss Somerville changed her name for that of Mrs. Bunn, and still remains on the stage, so Miss O'Neill has altered hers for Mrs. Beecher, and has, we fear, quitted us for good and all. 'There were two upon the house-top: one was taken, and the other was left!' Though, on our own accounts, we do not think this 'a

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consummation devoutly to be wished,' yet we cannot say we are sorry on her's. Hymen has, in this instance, with his flaming torch and saffron robe, borne a favourite actress from us, and held her fast, beyond the seas and sounding shores, 'to our moist vows denied': but, whatever complaints or repinings have been heard on the occasion, we think Miss O'Neill was in the right to do as she has done. *Fast bind fast find*, is an old proverb, and a good one, and is no doubt applicable to both sexes, and on both sides of the water. A husband, like death, cancels all other claims, and we think, more especially, any imaginary and imperfect obligations (with a clipt sixpence, and clap hands and a bargain), to the stage or to the town. Miss O'Neill (for so her name may yet linger on our tongues), made good her retreat in time from the world's 'slippery turns,' and we are glad that she has done so. It is better to retire from the stage, when young, with fame and fortune, than to have to return to it when old (as Mrs. Crawford, Mrs. Abington, and so many others have done) in poverty, neglect, and scorn. There is no marriage for better and for worse to the public; it is but a 'Mr. Limberham, or Kind Keeper,' at the very best: it does not tie itself to worship its favourites, or 'with its worldly goods them endow,' through good report, or evil report, in sickness or in health, 'till death them do part.' No such thing is even thought of: they must be always young, always beautiful, and dazzling, and allowed to be so; or they are instantly discarded, and they pass from their full-blown pride, and the purple light that irradiates them, into 'the list of weeds, and worn-out faces.' If a servant of the theatre dismisses himself without due warning, it makes a great deal of idle talk: but, on the other hand, does the theatre never dismiss one of its servants without formal notice, and is any thing then said about it? How many old favourites of the town—that many-headed abstraction, with new opinions, whims, and follies ever sprouting from its teeming brain; how many decayed veterans of the stage, do we remember, in the last ten or twenty years, laid aside 'in monumental mockery'; thrown from the pinnacle of prosperity and popularity, to pine in poverty and obscurity, their names forgotten, or staring in large capitals, asking for a benefit at some minor theatre! How many of these are to be seen, walking about with shrunk shanks and tattered hose, avoiding the eye of the stranger whom they suppose to have known them in better days; straggling through the streets with faltering steps, and on some hopeless errand,—with sinking hearts, or heart-broken long ago:—engaged, dismissed again, tampered with, tantalised, trifled with, pelted, hooted, scorned, unpitied: performing quarantine at a distance from the centre of all their hopes and wishes, as if their

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names were a stain on their former reputations ;—or perhaps received once more,—tolerated, endured out of charity, in the very places that they once adorned and gladdened by their presence !—And all this, often without any fault in themselves, any misconduct, any change, but in the taste and humour of the audience ; or from their own imprudence, in not guarding (while they had the opportunity) against the ingratitude and treachery of that very public, that claims them as its property, and would make them its slaves and puppets for life—or during pleasure ! We might make out a long list of superannuated pensioners on public patronage, who have had the last grudging pittance of favour withdrawn from them, but it could do no sort of good, and that we would not expose the names themselves to the gaze and wonder of vulgar curiosity. We are only not sorry that Miss O'Neill has put it out of the power of the Nobility, the Gentry, and her Friends in general, to add her name to the splendid, tarnished list ; and that she cannot, like so many of her predecessors, be chopped and changed, and hacked, and bandied about, in tragedy, or in comedy, in farce or in pantomime, in dance or song, at the Surrey, or the Cobourg, or the Sans Pareil Theatres ; or even be sent to mingle her silvery cadences with Mr. Kean's hoarse notes at Old Drury !

Before, however, we take leave of her for ever in that capacity in which she has so often delighted, and so often astonished us, we must be excused in saying a few parting words of that excellence, which, for the future, can be known (how very imperfectly !) only by description, and be remembered only as an enchanting dream. We believe that ladies, even after the marriage ceremony, sign their maiden names in the church-register : we hope that Miss O'Neill will not refuse to subscribe, in the same manner, to our critical jurisdiction, for the last time that we shall have to exercise it upon her.

Miss O'Neill was in size of the middle form : her complexion was fair : and her person not inelegant. She stooped somewhat in the shoulders, but not so as to destroy grace or dignity :—in moving across the stage, she dragged a little in her step, with some want of firmness and elasticity. The action of her hands and arms, however (one of the least common, and therefore, we suppose, one of the most difficult accomplishments an actor or actress has to acquire), was perfectly just, simple and expressive. They either remained in unconscious repose by her side, or, if employed, it was to anticipate or confirm the language of the eye and tongue. There was no affectation, no unmeaning display, or awkward deficiency in her gesticulation ; but her body and mind seemed to be under the

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guidance of the same impulse, to move in concert, and to be moulded into unity of effect by a certain natural grace, earnestness, and good sense. The contour of her face was nearly oval; and her features approached to the regularity of the Grecian outline. The expression of them was confined either to the extremity of pain and agony, or to habitual softness and placidity, with an occasional smile of great sweetness. Her voice was deep, clear, and mellow, capable of the most forcible exertion, but, in ordinary speaking, 'gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman!' She, however, owed comparatively little to physical qualifications: there was nothing in her face, voice, or person, sufficiently striking to have obtruded her into notice, or to have been a factitious substitute for other requisites. Her external advantages were merely the medium through which her internal powers displayed their refulgence, without obstruction or refraction (with the exception hereafter to be stated): they were the passive instruments, which her powerful and delicate sensibility wielded, with the utmost propriety, ease, and effect. Her excellence (unrivalled by any actress since Mrs. Siddons) consisted in truth of nature, and force of passion. Her correctness did not seem the effect of art or study, but of instinctive sympathy, of a conformity of mind and disposition to the character she was playing, as if she had unconsciously become the very person. There were no catching lights, no pointed hits, no theatrical tricks, no female arts resorted to, in her best or general style of acting: there was a singleness, an entireness, and harmony in it, that gave it a double charm as well as a double power. It rested on the centre of its own feelings. Her style of acting was smooth, round, polished, and classical, like a marble statue; self-supported, and self-involved; owing its resemblance to life, to the truth of imitation; not to startling movements, and restless contortion, but returning continually within the softened line of beauty and nature. Her manner was, in this respect, the opposite of Mr. Kean's, of whom no man can say (either in a good or in a bad sense) that he is like a marble statue, but of whom it may be said, with some appearance of truth, that he is like a paste-board figure, the little, uncouth, disproportioned parts of which, children pull awry, twitch, and jerk about in fifty odd and unaccountable directions, to laugh at—or like the mock figure of Harlequin, that is stuck against the wall, and pulled in pieces, and fastened together again, with twenty idle, pantomimic, eccentric absurdities! Or he seems to have St. Antony's fire in his veins, St. Vitus's dance in his limbs, and a devil tugging at every part:—one shrugging his shoulders, another wagging his head, another hobbling in his legs, another tapping his breast; one straining his voice till it is ready to crack, another suddenly, and surprisingly,

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dropping it down into an inaudible whisper, which is made distinct and clear by the 'bravos' in the pit, and the shouts of the gallery. There was not any of this paltry patch-work, these vulgar snatches at applause, these stops, and starts, and breaks, in Miss O'Neill's performance, which was sober, sedate, and free from pretence and mummery. We regret her loss the more, and fear we shall have to regret it more deeply every day. In a word, Mr. Kean's acting is like an anarchy of the passions, in which each upstart humour, or phrensy of the moment, is struggling to get violent possession of some bit or corner of his fiery soul and pigmy body—to jostle out, and lord it over, the rest of the rabble of short-lived and furious purposes. Miss O'Neill seemed perfect mistress of her own thoughts, and if she was not indeed the rightful queen of tragedy, she had at least all the decorum, grace, and self-possession of one of the Maids of Honour waiting around its throne.—Miss O'Neill might have played, to the greatest advantage, in one of the tragedies of Sophocles, which are the perfection of the stately, elegant, and simple drama of the Greeks; we cannot conceive of Mr. Kean making a part of any such classical group. Perhaps, however, we may magnify his defects in this particular, as we have been accused of over-rating his general merits. We do not think it an easy matter 'to praise him, or blame him too much.' We have never heard any thing to alter the opinion we always entertained of him: he can only do it himself—by his own acting. While we owe it to him to speak largely of his genius and his powers, we owe it to the public to protest against the eccentricities of the one, or the abuses of the other.

To return from this digression. With all the purity and simplicity, Miss O'Neill possessed the utmost force of tragedy. Her soul was like the sea, calm, beautiful, smiling, smooth, and yielding; but the storm of adversity lashed it into foam, laid bare its centre, or heaved its billows against the skies. She could repose on gentleness, or dissolve in tenderness, and at the same time give herself up to all the agonies of woe. She could express fond affection, pity, rage, despair, madness. She felt all these passions in their simple and undefinable elements only. She felt them as a woman,—as a mistress, as a wife, a mother, or a friend. She seemed to have the most exquisite sense of the pressure of those soft ties, that were woven round her heart, and that bound her to her place in society; and the rending them asunder appeared to give a proportionable revulsion to her frame, and disorder to her thoughts. There was nothing in her acting of a preternatural or *ideal* cast—that could lift the mind above mortality, or might be fancied to descend from another sphere. But she gave the full, the true, and unalloyed expression, to all that is common, obvious,

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and heart-felt in the charities of private life, and in the conflict of female virtue and attachment with the hardest trials and intolerable griefs. She did not work herself up to the extremity of passion, by questioning with her own thoughts; or raise herself above circumstances, by ascending the platform of imagination; or arm herself against fate, by strengthening her will to meet it: no, she yielded to calamity, she gave herself up entire, and with entire devotion, to her unconquerable despair:—it was the tide of anguish swelling in her own breast, that overflowed to the breasts of the audience, and filled their eyes with tears as the loud torrent projects itself from the cliff to the abyss below, and bears everything before it in its resistless course. The source of her command over public sympathy, lay, in short, in the intense conception, and unrestrained expression, of what she, and every other woman of natural sensibility, would feel in given circumstances, in which she, and every other woman, was liable to be placed. Her Belvidera, Isabella, Mrs. Beverley, &c. were all characters of this strictly feminine class of heroines, and she played them to the life. They were made of softness and suffering. We recollect the first time we saw her in Belvidera, when the manner in which she threw herself into the arms of Jaffier, before they part, was as if her heart would have leaped out of her bosom, if she had not done so. It staggered the spectator like a blow. Again, her first meeting with Biron, in Isabella, was no less admirable and impressive. She looked at, she saw, she knew him: her surprise, her joy were painted in her face, and woke every nerve to rapture. She seemed to have perfected all that her art could do. But the sudden alteration of her look and manner, the shuddering and recoil within herself, when she recovers from her surprise, and recollects her situation, married to another,—at once on the verge of ecstasy and perdition,—baffled description, and threw all that she had before done in the shade,—‘like to another morn, risen on mid noon.’ We could mention many other instances, but they are still too fresh in the memory of our readers to make it necessary. It must be confessed, as perhaps the only drawback on Miss O’Neill’s merit, or on the pleasure derived from seeing her, that she sometimes carried the expression of grief, or agony of mind, to a degree of physical horror that could hardly be borne. Her shrieks, in the concluding scenes of some of her parts, were like those of mandrakes, and you stopped your ears against them: her looks were of ‘moody madness, laughing wild, amidst severest woe,’ and you turned your eyes from them; for they seemed to sear like the lightning. Her eye-balls rolled in her head: her words rattled in her throat. This was carrying reality too far. The sufferings of the body are no longer proper for

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dramatic exhibition when they become objects of painful attention in themselves, and are not merely indications of what passes in the mind—comments and interpreters of the moral sense within. The effect was the more ungrateful from the very contrast (as we before hinted) between this lady's form and delicate complexion, and the violent conflict into which she was thrown. She seemed like the little flower, not the knotted oak, contending with the pitiless storm. There appeared no reason why she should 'mar that whiter skin of her's than snow, or monumental alabaster,' or rend and dishevel, with ruthless hand, those graceful locks, fairer than the opening day. But these were faults arising from pushing truth and nature to an excess, and we should, at present, be glad to see 'the best virtues' of others make even an approach to them. Her common style of speaking had a certain mild and equable intonation, not quite free from *manner*, but in the more impassioned parts, she became proportionably natural, bold, and varied. In comedy, Miss O'Neill did not, in our judgment, excel: her *forte* was the serious. Had we never seen her play anything but Lady Teazle, we should not have felt the regret at parting with her, which we now do, in common with every lover of genius, and of the genuine drama.

But it is high time that we should turn from the actors we have lost, to those that still remain amongst us.—Among the novelties of the season are, of course, the two Pantomimes, which, lest we should forget them at last, we shall mention in the first place. We cannot say that we exactly relish the taking Don Quixote as the subject of a Pantomime. The knight was battered and bruised enough in his life-time, without undergoing a gratuitous penance at this time of day. With all our good-will to Mr. Grimaldi, we have a greater affection for Sancho Panza, and do not want to see him metamorphosed into anything but himself. Indeed we cannot spoil Don Quixote; but neither need we try to do it.—Jack and the Bean Stalk is the legitimate growth of the Christmas holidays, and the winter Theatres. The wonders of the necromancer are equalled by the surprising arts of the mechanist. The favoured Bean Stalk grows and ascends the skies, as it did to our infant imaginations, and as if it would never have done growing; and Ogres and Ogresses become familiar to our senses, as to our early fears, in the enchanted palace of Drury-lane Theatre. Seeing is sometimes believing. It is worth going to a good Pantomime if it was for no other reason than to hear the children from school laugh at it, till they are ready to split their sides. What we can no longer enjoy, or wonder at ourselves, it is well to take at the rebound, in the reflection of happy faces, and in the echo of joyous mirth. These little real folks are even better

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than the fantastical beings, and poetic visions, we see upon the stage!

We are sorry we cannot say anything to reverse the judgment passed upon a new comedy, called *Gallantry, or Adventures at Madrid*, brought out at this Theatre in the beginning of the month. It was a *comedy of intrigue*; and, in conformity with the idea of this style of invention, was decorated with a wearisome display of Spanish costume, and enriched with an unmeaning catalogue of enamoured Dons, and disdainful or neglected Donnas. The plot was intricate, so as to become unintelligible, mechanical, and improbable. Every contrivance 'had its brother, and half the story just reflects the other.' There was a strange and insurmountable coincidence of antithetical blunders and epigrammatic accidents. The author's invention seemed to *run on all fours*, to cut out the different compartments of his fable, like the figures in a country-dance, to answer to one another: or he made all his characters turn the tables on one another, without knowing it. Thus, if a lady sends a letter very innocently to the lover of another, her own lover writes a letter to the mistress of his imaginary rival; if an old fellow falls in love with a young lady, this turns out to be his son's intended bride; and in this manner the game of cross-purposes is easily kept up, and the plot is diversified by the rule of contraries throughout. There was little attempt at wit in this piece (what little there is was flat and shallow, as well as gross), and there was no attempt at interest or sentiment, except in the character of Constantia, which was well played by Mrs. West, but very ill supported by the author. Mr. Barnard was her lover; and we must say that this gentleman spoils any intrigue in which he is engaged, if it soars above a chambermaid. He plays an impudent, self-sufficient valet, with good emphasis and discretion, or can get through an under-steward very well; but he cannot act the hero or look the gentleman. There is a cast of parts, for which Mr. Barnard is really qualified; and we are unwilling to see him taken out of them, both for his sake and our own. The play was altogether ill got up: it indeed called out the strength of the house, but there was either nothing for them to do, or their parts became them as little as their dresses. Mr. Harley, for instance, who is always so lively in himself, and who so often enlivens others, was put to play a villainous grave Spanish Don, who is full of stratagem and deliberate knavery; and he popped, and wriggled, and fidgetted on and off the stage, nodding his airy plumes, and shaking the powdered locks, in which he had been bedizened out, like the figure of Pug we have seen at Bartlemy-Fair, or in Hogarth's picture of the same little chuckling favourite, in *Fashion in High Life*. The fault was not in Mr.

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Harley, who always does his best to please, but in the cut of his clothes, and the cast of his part. Russell had no business in the play. He looked like an Alguazil, not like a Madrid gallant. Instead of meddling with the Spanish cavalier, and strutting about with a feather in his hat and a sword by his side, he should be *At Home* every night of his life, in Jerry Sneak: he is abroad in almost every other character! Munden made nothing of an amorous, superannuated, wheedling old lord: and, making nothing of the part 'as it was set down for him,' he tried, now and then, to thrust in a little caricature of his own, and to insinuate a bye-joke to the galleries. Munden's is not 'the courtier's or the lover's melancholy;' but a quaint, fantastical, uncouth, irresistible humour of his own, and he must be strangely grouped, or disposed of, on the theatrical canvass, to lose all his effect. Munden is not a sickly, vapid, decayed innamorato, fit to make his approaches to his mistress's eyebrows, in good set terms, or with cringing manners: he is a sturdy grotesque—a wild exotic, not a faded passion flower. He does not belong to any class, fashionable or vulgar. He is himself alone: and should only personate those extraordinary and marked characters, that Gilray painted, and O'Keeffe drew. Dowton and Knight were pieces of supererogation in the comedy of Gallantry; and Mrs. Harlowe is only happy in those parts which are meant to be unequivocally repulsive. Miss Kelly was neatly tucked up, in a Spanish bodice and petticoat; and had to carry several messages on or off the stage, in which she succeeded. The play languished on to the end of the fifth act, and then died a natural death. The only chance which it had of escaping was from one or two dramatic situations, borrowed from well-known plays, but disfigured and deprived of their effect, that they might pass for new. One of these was, where Mrs. West, as Constantia, retires from her antiquated lover (Munden) on his knees, in the middle of a speech, profuse of sentiments and compliments, and leaves her maid, Mrs. Harlowe, to receive the reversion of his protestations: the old gallant not discovering his mistake, till he is interrupted by the entrance of company. Mrs. Edwin delivered an Epilogue with some spirit, but its appeals to the favour of the audience only bespoke repeated condemnation. After the curtain dropped, Mr. Elliston, who had performed a part in the piece, came forward to announce that it was withdrawn; but, in submitting to the pleasure of the House, he seemed disposed to dispute the soundness of their taste. He said, 'It was a difficult thing to write a good comedy; perhaps a more difficult thing to judge of one.' Critics as we are, we cannot make up our minds to that opinion. Or we might say in answer, 'It is an easy thing

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to write a bad comedy; a more easy thing to judge of one.'<sup>1</sup> Be that as it may (for we do not wish to be drawn into a literary or metaphysical controversy with the present manager of Drury Lane), we do not see what it was to the purpose. Does Mr. Elliston mean to infer, that, because it is a difficult thing to judge of a good comedy, he is a better judge than any one else, or than the great majority of the audience, who had pronounced sentence upon this? Suppose the comedy had succeeded, as completely as it failed, and that a single individual in the pit had got up to say, that he differed from every one present, and that his uncalled-for opinion was to be put in competition with the voice of the House, would not Mr. Elliston have thought it a great piece of impertinence and presumption? Why then should he commit the same folly himself?

At Covent Garden there have been two new debutants, Mr. Nathan as Henry Bertram, in Guy Mannering, and Miss Wensley as Rosalind. The first was a decided failure. We do not know what Mr. Nathan's powers of voice or execution in a room may be: but he has evidently not the capacity of sending out a sufficient volume of articulate sound to fill a large theatre: neither is his manner of speaking, nor his action, at all fitted for the stage. Miss Wensley's Rosalind was well received, and has been repeated. Her face and figure are agreeable; her voice has considerable sweetness and flexibility; and her manner of performing the part itself was arch, graceful, and lively; though this young lady (who we understand had not appeared before on any stage) was withheld from giving herself up entirely to the character, by a natural and amiable timidity. We heartily wish she may succeed, and have no fear but she will.<sup>2</sup> Miss Tree has lately made a valuable addition to the musical strength of Covent Garden. She sings delightfully in company with Miss Stephens; and in the Comedy of Errors almost puzzles the town, as she does Antipholus of Syracuse, which to prefer: *Magis pares quam similes*. She is quite different, both in quality of voice and style of execution, from our old favourite; and it is this difference that completes the charm of their singing. Her tones are as firm, deep, and mellow, as Miss Stephens's are clear and sweet. Her ear is as true as it is possible to be; and the sustained manner in which she dwells upon a note, is as delightful as the airy fluttering grace with which Miss Stephens varies, and sportively plays with it. The singing of the one may be compared perhaps to a continued stream of

<sup>1</sup> 'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill  
Appear in writing, or in judging ill.' *Pope*.

<sup>2</sup> This young lady has since acted Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, with considerable applause.

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honeyed sound, while that of the other is like the tremulous bubbles that float and rise above its surface. Or Miss Tree's singing has the consistency, the lengthened tenuity or breadth of tone, drawn from a well-strung violin, as Miss Stephens's resembles the light, liquid, echoing accompaniments of the harp or lute. Of both together, it may be said, when they join their efforts in a single composition, that 'All is grace above, while all is strength below.' It is a treat to which of late we have been seldom accustomed.

MR. KEAN'S CORIOLANUS.—Mr. Kean's acting is not of the patrician order; he is one of the people, and what might be termed a *radical* performer. He can do all that may become a man 'of our infirmity,' 'to relish all as sharply, passioned as we;' but he cannot play a God, or one who fancies himself a God, and who is sublime, not in the strength of his own feelings, but in his contempt for those of others, and in his imaginary superiority to them. That is, he cannot play Coriolanus so well as he plays some other characters, or as we have seen it played often. Wherever there was a struggle of feelings, a momentary ebullition of pity, or remorse, or anguish, wherever nature resumed her wonted rights, Mr. Kean was equal to himself, and superior to every one else; but the prevailing characteristics of the part are inordinate self-opinion, and haughty elevation of soul, that aspire above competition or controul, as the tall rock lifts its head above the skies, and is not bent or shattered by the storm, beautiful in its unconquered strength, terrible in its unaltered repose. Mr. Kean, instead of 'keeping his state,' instead of remaining fixed and immoveable (for the most part) on his pedestal of pride, seemed impatient of this mock-dignity, this *still-life* assumption of superiority; burst too often from the trammels of precedent, and the *routine* of etiquette, which should have confined him; and descended into the common arena of man, to make good his pretensions by the energy with which he contended for them, and to prove the hollowness of his supposed indifference to the opinion of others by the excessive significance and studied variations of the scorn and disgust he expressed for it. The intolerable airs and aristocratical pretensions of which he is the slave, and to which he falls a victim, did not seem *legitimate* in him, but upstart, turbulent, and vulgar. Thus his haughty answer to the mob who banish him—'I banish you'—was given with all the virulence of execration, and rage of impotent despair, as if he had to strain every nerve and faculty of soul to shake off the contamination of their hated power over him, instead of being delivered with calm, majestic self-possession, as if he remained rooted to the spot, and his least motion, word, or look, must scatter them like chaff or scum from his presence! The most effective scene was

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that in which he stands for the Consulship, and begs for 'the most sweet voices' of the people whom he loathes; and the most ineffective was that in which he is reluctantly reconciled to, and overcome by the entreaties of, his mother. This decisive and affecting interview passed off as if nothing had happened, and was conducted with diplomatic gravity and skill. The casting of the other parts was a climax in bathos. Mr. Gattie was Menenius, the friend of Coriolanus, and Mr. Penley Tullus Aufidius, his mortal foe. Mr. Pope should have played the part. One would think there were processions and ovations enough in this play, as it was acted in John Kemble's time; but besides these, there were introduced others of the same sort, some of which were lengthened out as if they would reach all the way to the Circus; and there was a sham-fight, of melodramatic effect, in the second scene, in which Mr. Kean had like to have lost his voice. There was throughout a continual din of—

'Guns, drums, trumpets, blunderbuss, and thunder,'

or what was very like it. In the middle of an important scene, the tinkling of the stage-bell was employed to announce a flourish of trumpets—a thing which even Mr. Glossop would not hear of, whatever the act of parliament might say to enforce such a puppet-show accompaniment. There is very bad management in all this; and yet Mr. Elliston is the manager.

### THE DRAMA: No. III

*The London Magazine.*

*March, 1820.*

MINOR THEATRES.—This is a subject on which we shall treat, with satisfaction to ourselves, and, we hope, to the edification of the reader. Indeed, we are not a little vain of the article we propose to write on this occasion; and we feel the pen in our hands flutter its feathered down with more than its usual specific levity, at the thought of the idle, careless career before it. No Theatre-Royal oppresses the imagination, and entombs it in a mausoleum of massy pride; no manager's pompous pretensions choak up the lively current of our blood: no long-announced performance, big with expectation, comes to nothing, and yet compels us gravely to record its failure, and compose its epitaph. We have here 'ample scope and verge enough;' we pick and chuse as we will, light where we please, and stay no longer than we have a mind—saying 'this I like, that I loath, as one picks pears:'—hover over the Surry Theatre; or snatch a grace beyond the reach of art from the Miss Dennetts at the Adelphi; or take a peep (like the Devil upon Two Sticks) at Mr. Booth at the

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Cobourg—and one peep is sufficient :—or stretch our legs and strain our fancies (as a pure voluntary exercise of dramatic faith and charity) as far as Mr. Rae and the East London, where Mrs. Gould (late Miss Burrell) makes fine work with Don Giovanni and the Furies! We are not, in this case, to be ‘constrained by mastery.’—Escaped from under the more immediate inspection of the Lord Chamberlain’s eye, fastidious objections, formal method, regular details, strict moral censure, cannot be expected at our hands: our ‘speculative and officed instruments’ may be well laid aside for a time. At sight of the purlieus of taste, and suburbs of the drama, criticism ‘clappeth his wings, and straitway he is gone!’ In short, we feel it as our bounden duty to strike a truce with gravity, and give a furlough to fancy; and, in entering on this part of our subject, to let our thoughts wander over it, sport and trifle with it at pleasure, like the butterfly of whom Spenser largely and loftily sings in his *Muiopotmos*.—

‘There he arriving, round about doth fly  
From bed to bed, from one to other border,  
And takes survey, with curious busy eye,  
Of every flower and herb there set in order;  
Now this, now that he tasteth tenderly,  
Yet none of them he rudely doth disorder,  
Nor with his feet their silken leaves deface,  
But pastures on the pleasures of each place.

What more felicity can fall to creature  
Than to enjoy Delight with Liberty,  
And to be lord of all the works of Nature,  
To reign in th’ air from earth to highest sky :  
To feed on flowers, and weeds of glorious feature,  
To take whatever thing doth please the eye?  
Who rests not pleased with such happiness,  
Well worthy he to taste of wretchedness!’

If we could but once realise this idea of a butterfly-critic extracting sweets from flowers and turning gall to honey, we might well hope to soar above the Grub-street race, and confound, by the novelty of our appearance, and the gaiety of our flight, the idle conjectures of ignorant or malicious pretenders in entomology!

Besides, having once got out of the vortex of prejudice and fashion, that surrounds our large Winter Theatres, what is there to hinder us (or what shall) from dropping down from the verge of the metropolis into the haunts of the provincial drama;—from taking coach to Bath or Brighton, or visiting the Land’s-End, or giving an account of Botany-bay theatricals, or the establishment of a new theatre at Venezuela? One reason that makes the Minor Theatres interesting is, that they are the connecting link, that lets us down, by an easy

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transition, from the highest pomp and proudest display of the Thespian art, to its first rudiments and helpless infancy.—With conscious happy retrospect, they lead the eye back, along the *vista* of the imagination, to the village barn, or travelling booth, or old-fashioned town-hall, or more genteel assembly-room, in which Momus first unmasked to us his fairy revels, and introduced us, for the first time in our lives, to that strange anomaly in existence, that fanciful reality, that gay waking dream, *a company of strolling players* ! Sit still, draw close together, hold in your breath—not a word, not a whisper—the laugh is ready to start away, ‘like greyhound on the slip,’ the big tear of wonder and expectation is ready to steal down ‘the full eyes and fair cheeks of childhood,’ almost before the time. Only another moment, and amidst blazing tapers, and the dancing sounds of music, and light throbbing hearts, and eager looks, the curtain rises, and the picture of the world appears before us in all its glory and in all its freshness. Life throws its gaudy shadow across the stage ; Hope shakes his many-coloured wings, ‘embalmed with odours ;’ Joy claps his hands, and laughs in a hundred happy faces. Oh childish fancy, what a mighty empire is thine ; what endless creations thou buildest out of nothing ; what ‘a wide O’ indeed, thou chusest to act thy thoughts, and unrivalled feats upon ! Thou art better than the gilt trophy that decks the funeral pall of kings ; thou art brighter than the costly mace that precedes them on their coronation-day. Thy fearfullest visions are enviable happiness ; thy wildest fictions are the solidest truths. Thou art the only reality. All other possessions mock our idle grasp : but thou performest by promising ; thy smile is fruition ; thy blandishments are all that we can fairly call our own ; thou art the balm of life, the heaven of childhood, the poet’s idol, and the player’s pride ! The world is but thy painting ; and the stage is thine enchanted mirror.—When it first displays its shining surface to our view, how glad, how surprised are we ! We have no thought of any deception in the scene, no wish but to realise it ourselves with inconsiderate haste and fond impatience. We say to the air-drawn gorgeous phantom, ‘Come, let me clutch thee !’ A new sense comes upon us, the scales fall off our eyes, and the scenes of life start out in endless quick succession crowded with men and women-actors, such as we see before us—comparable to ‘those gay creatures of the element, that live in the rainbow, and play i’ th’ plighted clouds !’ Happy are we who look on and admire ; and happy, we think, must they be who are so looked at and admired ; and sometimes we begin to feel uneasy till we can ourselves mingle in the gay, busy, talking, fluttering, powdered, painted, perfumed, peruked, quaintly-accounted throng of coxcombs and coquettes,—of tragedy heroes or heroines,

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—in good earnest; or turn stage-players and represent them in jest, with all the impertinent and consequential airs of the originals!

It is no insignificant epoch in one's life the first time that odd-looking thing, a play-bill, is left at our door in a little market-town in the country (say W—m in S—shire). The Manager, somewhat fatter and more erect, 'as Manager beseems,' than the rest of his Company, with more of the man of business, and not less of the coxcomb, in his strut and manner, knocks at the door with the end of a walking cane (a badge of office!) and a bundle of papers under his arm; presents one of them printed in large capitals, with a respectful bow and a familiar shrug; hopes to give satisfaction in the town; hints at the liberal encouragement they received at W—ch, the last place they stopped at; had every possible facility afforded by the Magistrates; supped one evening with the Rev. Mr. J—s, a dissenting clergyman, and really a very well-informed, agreeable, sensible man, full of anecdote—no illiberal prejudices against the profession:—then talks of the strength of his company, with a careless mention of his own favourite line—his benefit fixed for an early day, but would do himself the honour to leave farther particulars at a future opportunity—speaks of the stage as an elegant amusement, that most agreeably enlivened a spare evening or two in the week, and, under proper management (to which he himself paid the most assiduous attention), might be made of the greatest assistance to the cause of virtue and humanity—had seen Mr. Garrick act the last night but one before his retiring from the stage—had himself had offers from the London boards, and indeed could not say he had given up all thoughts of one day surprising them—as it was, had no reason to repine—Mrs. F—— tolerably advanced in life—his eldest son a prodigious turn for the higher walks of tragedy—had said perhaps too much of himself—had given universal satisfaction—hoped that the young gentleman and lady, at least, would attend on the following evening, when the West-Indian would be performed at the market-hall, with the farce of No Song No Supper—and so having played his part, withdraws in the full persuasion of having made a favourable impression, and of meeting with every encouragement the place affords! Thus he passes from house to house, and goes through the routine of topic after topic, with that sort of modest assurance, which is indispensable in the manager of a country theatre. This fellow, who floats over the troubles of life as the froth above the idle wave, with all his little expedients and disappointments, with pawned paste-buckles, mortgaged scenery, empty exchequer, and rebellious orchestra, is not of all men the most miserable:—he is little less happy than a king, though not much better off than a

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beggar. He has little to think of, much to do, more to say; and is accompanied, in his incessant daily round of trifling occupations, with a never-failing sense of authority and self-importance, the one thing needful (above all others) to the heart of man. This however is their man of business in the company; he is a sort of fixture in their little state; like Nebuchadnezzar's image, but half of earth and half of finer metal: he is not 'of imagination all compact:' he is not, like the rest of his aspiring crew, a feeder upon air, a drinker of applause, tricked out in vanity and in nothing else; he is not quite mad, nor quite happy. The whining Romeo, who goes supperless to bed, and on his pallet of straw dreams of a crown of laurel, of waving handkerchiefs, of bright eyes, and billets-doux breathing boundless love: the ranting Richard, whose infuriate execrations are drowned in the shouts of the all-ruling pit; he who, without a coat to his back, or a groat in his purse, snatches at Cato's robe, and binds the diadem of Cæsar on his brow;—these are the men that Fancy has chosen for herself, and placed above the reach of fortune, and almost of fate. They take no thought for the morrow. What is it to them what they shall eat, or what they shall drink, or how they shall be clothed? 'Their mind to them a kingdom is.'—It is not a poor ten shillings a week, their share in the profits of the theatre, with which they have to pay for bed, board, and lodging, that bounds their wealth. They share (and not unequally) in all the wealth, the pomp, and pleasures of the world. They wield sceptres, conquer kingdoms, court princesses, are clothed in purple, and fare sumptuously every night. They taste, in imagination, 'of all earth's bliss, both living and loving:' whatever has been most the admiration or most the envy of mankind, they, for a moment, in their own eyes, and in the eyes of others, become. The poet fancies others to be this or that; the player fancies himself to be all that the poet but describes. A little rouge makes him a lover, a plume of feathers a hero, a brazen crown an emperor. Where will you buy rank, office, supreme delights, so cheap as at his shop of fancy? Is it nothing to dream whenever we please, and *seem* whatever we desire? Is real greatness, is real prosperity, more than what it seems? Where shall we find, or where shall the votary of the stage find, Fortunatus's Wishing Cap, but in the wardrobe which we laugh at: or borrow the philosopher's stone but from the *property-man* of the theatre? He has discovered the true Elixir of Life, which is freedom from care: he quaffs the pure *aurum potable*, which is popular applause. He who is smit with the love of this *ideal* existence, cannot be weaned from it. Hoot him from the stage, and he will stay to sweep the lobbies or shift the scenes. Offer him twice the salary to go into a counting-house, or

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stand behind a counter, and he will return to poverty, steeped in contempt, but eked out with fancy, at the end of a week. Make a laughing-stock of an actress, lower her salary, tell her she is too tall, awkward, stupid, and ugly; try to get rid of her all you can—she will remain, only to hear herself courted, to listen to the echo of her borrowed name, to live but one short minute in the lap of vanity and tinsel shew. Will you give a man an additional ten shillings a week, and ask him to resign the fancied wealth of the world, which he ‘by his so potent art’ can conjure up, and glad his eyes, and fill his heart with it? When a little change of dress, and the muttering a few talismanic words, make all the difference between the vagabond and the hero, what signifies the interval so easily passed? Would you not yourself consent to be alternately a beggar and a king, but that you have not the secret skill to be so? The player has that ‘happy alchemy of mind:’—why then would you reduce him to an equality with yourself?—The moral of this reasoning is known and felt, though it may be gainsayed. Wherever the players come, they send a welcome before them, and leave an air in the place behind them.<sup>1</sup> They shed a light upon the day, that does not very soon pass off. See how they glitter along the street, wandering, not where business but the bent of pleasure takes them, like mealy-coated butterflies, or insects flitting in the sun. They seem another, happier, idler race of mortals, prolonging the carelessness of childhood to old age, floating down the stream of life, or wafted by the wanton breeze to their final place of rest. We remember one (we must make the reader acquainted with him) who once overtook us loitering by ‘Severn’s sedgy side,’ on a fine May morning, with a score of play-bills streaming from his pockets, for the use of the neighbouring villages, and a music-score in his hand, which he sung blithe and clear, advancing with light step and a loud voice! With a sprightly *bon jour*, he passed on, carolling to the echo of the babbling stream, brisk as a bird, gay as a mote, swift as an arrow from a twanging bow, heart-whole, and with shining face that shot back the sun’s broad rays!—What is become of this favourite of mirth and song? Has care touched him? Has death tripped up his heels? Has an indigestion imprisoned him, and all his gaiety, in a living dungeon? Or is he himself lost and buried amidst the rubbish of one of our larger, or else of one of our Minor Theatres?

——‘Alas! how changed from him,  
That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim!’

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<sup>1</sup> So the old song joyously celebrates their arrival:—

‘The beggars are coming to town,  
Some in rags, and some in jags, and some in velvet gowns.’

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But as this was no doubt the height of his ambition, why should we wish to debar him of it ?

This brings us back, after our intended digression, to the subject from whence we set out,—the smaller theatres of the metropolis; which we visited lately, in hopes to find in them a romantic contrast to the presumptuous and exclusive pretensions of the legitimate drama, and to revive some of the associations of our youth above described. —The first attempt we made was at the Cobourg, and we were completely baulked. Judge of our disappointment. This was not owing, we protest, to any fault or perversity of our own; to the crust and scales of formality which had grown over us; to the panoply of criticism in which we go armed, and which made us inaccessible to ‘pleasure’s finest point;’ or to the *cheveux-de-fris* of objections, which cut us off from all cordial participation in what was going forward on the stage. No such thing. We went not only willing, but determined to be pleased. We had laid aside the pedantry of rules, the petulance of sarcasm, and had hoped to open once more, by stealth, the source of sacred tears, of bubbling laughter, and concealed sighs. We were not formidable. On the contrary, we were ‘made of penetrable stuff.’ Stooping from our pride of place, we were ready to be equally delighted with a clown in a pantomime, or a lord-mayor in a tragedy. We were all attention, simplicity, and enthusiasm. But we saw neither attention, simplicity, nor enthusiasm in any body else; and our whole scheme of voluntary delusion and social enjoyment was cut up by the roots. The play was indifferent, but that was nothing. The acting was bad, but that was nothing. The audience were low, but that was nothing. It was the heartless indifference and hearty contempt shown by the performers for their parts, and by the audience for the players and the play, that disgusted us with all of them. Instead of the rude, naked, undisguised expression of curiosity and wonder, of overflowing vanity and unbridled egotism, there was nothing but an exhibition of the most petulant cockneyism and vulgar slang. All our former notions and theories were turned topsy-turvy. The genius of St. George’s Fields prevailed, and you felt yourself in a bridewell, or a brothel, amidst Jew-boys, pickpockets, prostitutes, and mountebanks, instead of being in the precincts of Mount Parnassus, or in the company of the Muses. The object was not to admire or to excel, but to vilify and degrade every thing. The audience did not hiss the actors (that would have implied a serious feeling of disapprobation, and something like a disappointed wish to be pleased) but they laughed, hooted at, nick-named, pelted them with oranges and witticisms, to show their unruly contempt for them and their art; while the performers, to be even with

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the audience, evidently slurred their parts, as if ashamed to be thought to take any interest in them, laughed in one another's faces, and in that of their friends in the pit, and most effectually marred the process of theatrical illusion, by turning the whole into a most unprincipled burlesque. We cannot help thinking that some part of this indecency and licentiousness is to be traced to the diminutive size of these theatres, and to the close contact into which these unmannerly censors come with the objects of their ignorant and unfeeling scorn. Familiarity breeds contempt. By too narrow an inspection, you take away that fine, hazy medium of abstraction, by which (in moderation) a play is best set off: you are, as it were, admitted behind the scenes; 'see the puppets dallying;' shake hands, across the orchestra, with an actor whom you know, or take one you do not like by the beard, with equal impropriety:—you distinguish the paint, the individual features, the texture of the dresses, the patch-work and machinery by which the whole is made up; and this in some measure destroys the effect, distracts attention, suspends the interest, and makes you disposed to quarrel with the actors as impostors, and 'not the men you took them for.' You here see Mr. Booth, in Brutus, with every motion of his face *articulated*, with his under-jaws grinding out sentences, and his upper-lip twitching at words and syllables, as if a needle and thread had been passed through each corner of it, and the *gude wife* still continued sewing at her work:—you perceive the contortion and barrenness of his expression (in which there is only one form of bent brows, and close pent-up mouth for all occasions), the parsimony of his figure is exposed, and the refuse tones of his voice fall with undiminished vulgarity on the pained ear:—you have Mr. Higman as Prior Aymer in *Ivanhoe*, who used to play the Gipsej so well at Covent Garden in *Guy Mannering*, and who certainly is an admirable bass singer: you have Mr. Stanley, from the Theatre-Royal, Bath, and whom we thought an interesting actor there (such as poor Wilson might have been who trod the same boards, and with whom our readers will remember that Miss Lydia Melford, in *Humphrey Clinker*, fell in love):—you have Mr. Barrymore, that old and deserving favourite with the public in the best days of Mrs. Siddons and of John Kemble, superintending, we believe, the whole, from a little oval window in a stage-box, like Mr. Bentham eying the hopeful circle of delinquents in his *Panopticon*:—and, to sum up all in one word, you have here Mr. H. Kemble, whose hereditary gravity is put to the last test, by the yells and grins of the remorseless rabble.

'My soul turn from them!'—'Turn we to survey' where the Miss Dennetts, at the Adelphi Theatre (which should once more

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from them be called the *Sans Pareil*), weave the airy, the harmonious, liquid dance. Of each of them it might be said, and we believe has been said—

‘ Her, lovely Venus at a birth  
With two Sister Graces more  
To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore.’

Such figures, no doubt, gave rise to the fables of ancient mythology, and might be worshipped. They revive the ideas of classic grace, life, and joy. They do not seem like taught dancers, Columbines, and figurantes on an artificial stage; but come bounding forward like nymphs in vales of Arcady, or, like Italian shepherdesses, join in a lovely group of easy gracefulness, while ‘ vernal airs attune the trembling leaves ’ to their soft motions. If they were nothing in themselves, they would be complete in one another. Each owes a double grace, youth, and beauty, to her reflection in the other two. It is the principle of proportion or harmony personified. To deny their merit or criticise their style, is to be blind and dead to the felicities of art and nature. Not to feel the force of their united charms (united, yet divided, different, and yet the same), is not to see the beauty of ‘ three red roses on a stalk,’—or of the mingled hues of the rainbow, or of the halcyon’s breast, reflected in the stream,—or ‘ the witchery of the soft blue sky,’ or grace in the waving of the branch of a tree, or tenderness in the bending of a flower, or liveliness in the motion of a wave of the sea. We shall not try to defend them against the dancing-school critics; there is another school, different from that of the *pied à plomb* and *pirouette* cant, the school of taste and nature. In this school, the Miss Dennetts are (to say the least) delicious novices. Theirs is the only performance on the stage (we include the Opera) that gives the uninitiated spectator an idea that dancing can be an emanation of instinctive gaiety, or express the language of sentiment. We might shew them to the Count Stendhal, who speaks so feelingly of the beauties of a dance by Italian peasant girls, as our three English Graces; and we might add, as a farther proof of national liberality and public taste, that they had been discarded from one of our larger, to take refuge in one of our petty theatres, on a disagreement about a pound a week in their joint salaries. Yet we suppose if these young ladies were to marry, and not volunteer to put ten thousand pounds in the pockets of some liberally disposed manager, we should hear a very pitiful story of their ingratitude to their patrons and the public. It is the way of the world. There is a Mr. Reeve at this theatre (the Adelphi in the Strand) of whom report had spoken highly in his particular department as a mimic, and in whom we were considerably disappointed.

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He is not so good as Matthews, who, after all, is by no means a *fac-simile* of those he pretends to represent. We knew most of Mr. Reeve's likenesses, and that is the utmost we can say in their praise; for we thought them very bad ones. They were very slight, and yet contrived to be very disagreeable. Farren was the most amusing, from a certain oddity of voice and manner in the ingenious and eccentric original. Harley, again, was not at all the thing. There was something of the external dress and deportment, but none of the spirit, the frothy essence. He made him out a great burly swaggering ruffian, instead of being what he is—a pleasant, fidgetty person, pert as a jack-daw, light as a grasshopper. In short, from having seen Mr. Reeve, no one would wish to see Mr. Harley, though there is no one who has seen him but wishes to see him again; and, though mimicry has the privilege of turning into ridicule the loftier pretensions of tragic heroes, we believe it always endeavours to set off the livelier peculiarities of comic ones in the most agreeable light. Mr. Kean was bad enough. It might have been coarse and repulsive enough, and yet like; but it wanted point and energy, and this was inexcusable. We have heard much of ludicrous and admirable imitations of Mr. Kean's acting. But the only person who ever caricatures Mr. Kean well, or from whose exaggerations he has any thing to fear, is himself. There are several other actors at the Adelphi who are, and must continue to be, nameless. There are also some better known to the town, as Mr. Wilkinson, Mrs. Alsop, &c. This lady has lost none of her exuberant and piquant vivacity by her change of situation. She also looks much the same: and as you see her near, this circumstance is by no means to her advantage. The truth is, that there are not good actors or agreeable actresses enough in town to make one really good company (by which we mean a company able to get up any one really good play throughout) and of course there are not a sufficient number (unless by a miracle) to divide into eight or ten different establishments.

Of the Haymarket and Lyceum, which come more properly under the head of *Summer Theatres*, it is not at present 'our hint to speak;' but we may shortly take a peep into the Surrey and East London Theatres,<sup>1</sup> and enlarge upon them as we see cause. Of the latter it

<sup>1</sup> The story of the Heart of Midlothian was, we understand, got up at the Surrey Theatre last year by Mr. Dibdin, in the most creditable style. A Miss Taylor, we hear, made an inimitable Jenny Deans, Miss Copeland was surprising as Madge Wildfire, Mrs. Dibdin as Queen Caroline, was also said to be a complete piece of royal wax-work, and Dumbydikes was done to the life. Would we had seen them so done; but we can answer for these things positively on no authority but our own. If they make as good a thing of Ivanhoe, they will do more than the author has done.

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is sufficient to observe, that Mr. Rae is the principal tragic actor there, and Mr. Peter Moore the chief manager. After this, is it to be wondered at that Covent Garden is almost deserted, and that Mr. Elliston cannot yet afford to give up the practice of puffing at the bottom of his play-bills!

The larger, as well as the smaller, theatres have been closed during the greater part of the last month. There has been one new piece, the *Antiquary*, brought out at Covent Garden, since our last report. It is founded, as our readers will suppose, on the admirable novel of that name by the author of *Waverley*, but it is only a slight sketch of the story and characters, and not, we think, equal to the former popular melo-dramas taken from the same prolific source. The characters in general were not very intelligibly brought out, nor very strikingly cast. Liston made but an indifferent Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck. He was dressed in a snuff-coloured coat and plain bob-wig, and that was all. It was quaint and dry, and accordingly inefficient, and quite unlike his admirable portrait of Dominie Sampson, which is one of the finest pieces of acting on the stage, both for humour and feeling, invention and expression. The little odd ways and antiquarian whims and crotchets of Mr. Oldbuck, even were they as well managed in the drama as they are exquisitely hit off in the novel, would hardly tell in Liston's hands. Emery made an impressive Edie Ochiltree; but he was somewhat too powerful a preacher, and too sturdy a beggar. Mr. Abbott personated the haughty, petulant Captain MacIntire to a great nicety of resemblance. Mr. Duruset as young Lovell 'warbled' in a manner that Jacques would not have found fault with. Miss Stephens sang one or two airs very sweetly, and was complimented at the end very rapturously and unexpectedly by the *ungallant* Mr. Oldbuck. The scene on the sea-shore, where she is in danger of being overtaken by the tide, with her father and old Edie, had an admirable effect, as far as the imitation of the rolling of the waves of the sea on a London stage could produce admiration. The part of old Elspith of Craigie Burn Wood was strikingly performed by Mrs. Fawcett, who, indeed, acts whatever she undertakes well; and the scene with Lord Glenallan, in which she unfolds to him the dreadful story of his life, was given at much length and with considerable effect. But what can come up to the sublime, heart-breaking pathos, the terrific painting of the original work? The story of this unhappy feudal lord is the most harrowing in all these novels (rich as they are in the materials of nature and passion): and the description of the old woman, who had been a principal subordinate instrument in the tragedy, is done with a more masterly and withering hand than any other. Her death-like appearance, her

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strange existence, like one hovering between this world and the next, or like a speaking corpse; her fixed attitude, her complete forgetfulness of every thing but the one subject that loads her thoughts, her preternatural self-possession on that, her prophetic and awful denunciations, her clay-cold and shrivelled body, consumed and kept alive by a wasting fire within, are all given with a subtlety, a truth, a boldness and originality of conception, that were never, perhaps, surpassed. But the author does not want our praise; nor can we withhold from him our admiration.

Mr. Kean, the week before we saw him in *Coriolanus*, played *Othello*; and as we would always prefer bearing testimony to his genius, to recording his comparative failures, we will here express our opinion of his performance of this character in the words of a contemporary journal, a short time back:—

Mr. Kean's *Othello* is, we suppose, the finest piece of acting in the world. It is impossible either to describe or praise it adequately. We have never seen any actor so wrought upon, so 'perplexed in the extreme.' The energy of passion, as it expresses itself in action, is not the most terrific part: it is the agony of his soul, showing itself in looks and tones of voice. In one part, where he listens in dumb despair to the fiend-like insinuations of Iago, he presented the very face, the marble aspect of Dante's Count Ugolino. On his fixed eye-lids, 'horror sat plumed.' In another part, where a gleam of hope or of tenderness returns to subdue the tumult of his passions, his voice broke in faltering accents from his over-charged breast. His lips might be said less to utter words, than to distil drops of blood, gushing from his heart. An instance of this was in his pronunciation of the line, 'of one that loved not wisely but too well.' The whole of this last speech was indeed given with exquisite force and beauty. We only object to the virulence with which he delivers the last line, and with which he stabs himself—a virulence which *Othello* would neither feel against himself at the moment, nor against the 'turbaned Turk' (whom he had slain) at such a distance of time. His exclamation on seeing his wife, 'I cannot think but Desdemona's honest,' was, 'the glorious triumph of exceeding love;' a thought flashing conviction on his mind, and irradiating his countenance with joy, like sudden sunshine. In fact, almost every scene or sentence in this extraordinary exhibition is a master-piece of natural passion. The convulsed motion of the hands, and the involuntary swelling of the veins in the forehead in some of the most painful situations, should not only suggest topics of critical panegyric, but might furnish studies to the painter or anatomist.

### THE DRAMA: No. IV

*The London Magazine.*

*April, 1820.*

THE age we live in is critical, didactic, paradoxical, romantic, but it is not dramatic. This, if any, is its weak side: it is there that modern literature does not run on all fours, nor triumph over the periods that are past; it halts on one leg; and is fairly distanced

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by long-acknowledged excellence, as well as by long-forgotten efforts of the same kind. Our ancestors could write a tragedy two hundred years ago; they could write a comedy one hundred years ago; why cannot we do the same now? It is hard to say; but so it is. When we give it as our opinion, that this is not 'the high and palmy state' of the productions of the stage, we would be understood to signify, that there has hardly been a good tragedy or a good comedy written within the last fifty years, that is, since the time of Home's *Douglas*, and Sheridan's *School for Scandal*; and when we speak of a good tragedy or comedy, we mean one that will be thought so fifty years hence. Not that we would have it supposed, that a work, to be worth any thing, must last always: what we have said above of works that have fallen into unmerited decay, through the lapse of time, and mutation of circumstances, would show the contrary: but we think that a play that only runs its one-and-twenty nights, that does not reach beyond the life of an actor, or the fashion of a single generation, may be fairly set down as good for nothing, to any purposes of criticism, or serious admiration. Time seems to have its circle as well as the globe we inhabit; the loftiest eminences, by degrees, sink beneath the horizon; the greatest works are lost sight of in the end, and cannot be restored; but those that disappear at the first step we take, or are hidden by the first object that intervenes, can, in either case, be of no real magnitude or importance. We have never seen the highest range of mountains in the world; nor are the longest-lived works intelligible to us (from the difference both of language and manners) at this day: but the name of the Andes, like that of old, blind Homer, serves us on this side of the globe, and at the lag-end of time, to repeat and wonder at; and that we have ever heard of either is alone sufficient proof of the vastness of the one, and of the sublimity of the other! Without waiting for the final award, or gradual oblivion of slow-revolving ages, we may be bold to say of our writers for the stage, during the last twenty or thirty years, as Pope is reported to have said of Ben Jonson's, somewhat unadvisedly, 'What trash are *their* works, taken altogether!' We would not deny or depreciate merit, wherever we find it, in individuals, or in classes: for instance, we grant that all the pantomimes are good in which Mr. Grimaldi plays the clown; and that the melodrames have been excellent, when Mr. Farley had a hand in them; and that the farces could not be damned if Munden showed his face in them; and that O'Keeffe's could not fail with an audience that had a mind to laugh: but having mentioned these, and added a few more to our private list (for it might be invidious to specify particularly *No Song no Supper*, the *Prize*, *Goldfinch*, *Robert Tyke*,

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or Lubin Log, &c. &c.), we really are at a loss to proceed with the more legitimate and higher productions of the modern drama. Are there not then Mr. Coleridge's Remorse, Mr. Maturin's Bertram, Mr. Milman's Fazio, and many others? There are; but we do not know that they make any difference in the question. The poverty indeed of our present dramatic genius cannot be made appear more fully than by this, that whatever it has to shew of *profound*, is of German taste and origin; and that what little it can boast of *elegant*, though light and vain, is taken from *petite* pieces of Parisian mould.

We have been long trying to find out the meaning of all this, and at last we think we have succeeded. The cause of the evil complained of, like the root of so many other grievances and complaints, lies in the French revolution. That event has rivetted all eyes, and distracted all hearts; and, like people staring at a comet, in the panic and confusion in which we have been huddled together, we have not had time to laugh at one another's defects, or to condole over one another's misfortunes. We have become a nation of politicians and newsmongers; our inquiries in the streets are no less than after the health of Europe; and in men's faces, we may see strange matters written,—the rise of stocks, the loss of battles, the fall of kingdoms, and the death of kings. The Muse, meanwhile, droops in by-corners of the mind, and is forced to take up with the refuse of our thoughts. Our attention has been turned, by the current of events, to the general nature of men and things; and we cannot call it heartily back to individual caprices, or head-strong passions, which are the nerves and sinews of Comedy and Tragedy. What is an individual man to a nation? Or what is a nation to an abstract principle? The affairs of the world are spread out before us, as in a map; we sit with the newspaper, and a pair of compasses in our hand, to measure out provinces, and to dispose of thrones; we 'look abroad into universality,' feel in circles of latitude and longitude, and cannot contract the grasp of our minds to scan with nice scrutiny particular foibles, or to be engrossed by any single suffering. What we gain in extent, we lose in force and depth. A general and speculative interest absorbs the corroding poison, and takes out the sting of our more circumscribed and fiercer passions. We are become public creatures; 'are embowelled of our natural entrails, and stuffed,' as Mr. Burke has it in his high-flown phrase, 'with paltry blurred sheets of paper about the rights of man,' or the rights of legitimacy. We break our sleep to argue a question; a piece of news spoils our appetite for dinner. We are not so solicitous after our own success as the success of a cause.

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Our thoughts, feelings, distresses, are about what no way concerns us, more than it concerns any body else, like those of the Upholsterer, ridiculed as a new species of character in the Tatler: but we are become a nation of upholsterers. We participate in the general progress of intellect, and the large vicissitudes of human affairs; but the hugest private sorrow looks dwarfish and puerile. In the sovereignty of our minds, we make mankind our quarry; and, in the scope of our ambitious thoughts, hunt for prey through the four quarters of the world. In a word, literature and civilization have abstracted man from himself so far, that his existence is no longer *dramatic*; and the press has been the ruin of the stage, unless we are greatly deceived.

If a bias to abstraction is evidently, then, the reigning spirit of the age, dramatic poetry must be allowed to be most irreconcilable with this spirit; it is essentially individual and concrete, both in form and in power. It is the closest imitation of nature; it has a body of truth; it is 'a counterfeit presentment' of reality; for it brings forward certain characters to act and speak for themselves, in the most trying and singular circumstances. It is not enough for them to declaim on certain general topics, however forcibly or learnedly—this is merely oratory, and this any other characters might do as well, in any other circumstances: nor is it sufficient for the poet to furnish the colours and forms of style and fancy out of his own store, however inexhaustible; for if he merely makes them express his own feelings, and the idle effusions of his own breast, he had better speak in his own person, without any of those troublesome 'interlocutions between Lucius and Caius.' The tragic poet (to be truly such) can only deliver the sentiments of given persons, placed in given circumstances; and in order to make what so proceeds from their mouths, at once proper to them and interesting to the audience, their characters must be powerfully marked: their passions, which are the subject-matter of which they treat, must be worked up to the highest pitch of intensity; and the circumstances which give force and direction to them must be stamped with the utmost distinctness and vividness in every line. Within the circle of dramatic character and natural passion, each individual is to feel as keenly, as profoundly, as rapidly as possible, but he is not to feel beyond it, for others or for the whole. Each character, on the contrary, must be a kind of centre of repulsion to the rest; and it is their hostile interests, brought into collision, that must tug at their heart-strings, and call forth every faculty of thought, of speech, and action. They must not be represented like a set of profiles, looking all the same way, nor with their faces turned round to the audience; but in dire contention with each

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other : their words, like their swords, must strike fire from one another,—must inflict the wound, and pour in the poison. The poet, to do justice to his undertaking, must not only identify himself with each, but must take part with all by turns, ‘to relish all as sharply, passionate as they ;’—must feel scorn, pity, love, hate, anger, remorse, revenge, ambition, in their most sudden and fierce extremes,—must not only have these passions rooted in his mind, but must be alive to every circumstance affecting them, to every accident of which advantage can be taken to gratify or exasperate them ; a word must kindle the dormant spark into a flame ; an unforeseen event must overturn his whole being *in concept* ; it is from the excess of passion that he must borrow the activity of his imagination ; he must mould the sound of his verse to its fluctuations and caprices, and build up the whole superstructure of his fable on the deep and strict foundations of nature. But surely it is hardly to be thought that the poet should feel for others in this way, when they have ceased almost to feel for themselves ; when the mind is turned habitually out of itself to general, speculative truth, and possibilities of good, and when, in fact, the processes of the understanding, analytical distinctions, and verbal disputes, have superseded all personal and local attachments and antipathies, and have, in a manner, put a stop to the pulsation of the heart—quenched the fever in the blood—the madness in the brain ;—when we are more in love with a theory than a mistress, and would only crush to atoms those who are of an opposite party to ourselves in taste, philosophy, or politics. The folds of self-love, arising out of natural instincts, connections, and circumstances, have not wound themselves exclusively and unconsciously enough round the human mind to furnish the matter of impassioned poetry in real life : much less are we to expect the poet, without observation of its effects on others, or experience of them in himself, to supply the imaginary form out of vague topics, general reflections, far-fetched tropes, affected sentiments, and fine writing. To move the world, he must have a place to fix the levers of invention upon. The poet (let his genius be what it will) can only act by sympathy with the public mind and manners of his age ; but these are, at present, not in sympathy, but in opposition to dramatic poetry. Therefore, we have no dramatic poets. It would be strange indeed (under favour be it spoken) if in the same period of time that produced the Political Justice or the Edinburgh Review, there should be found such an ‘unfeathered, two-legged thing’ as a real tragedy poet.

But it may be answered, that the author of the Enquiry concerning Political Justice, is himself a writer of romances, and the author of

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Caleb Williams. We hearken to the suggestion, and will take this and one or two other eminent examples, to show how far we fall short of the goal we aim at. 'You may wear your *bays* with a difference.' Mr. Godwin has written an admirable and almost unrivalled novel (nay, more than one)—he has also written two tragedies, and failed. We can hardly think it would have been possible for him to have failed, but on the principle here stated; *viz.* that it was impossible for him to succeed. His genius is wholly adverse to the stage. As an author, as a novel writer, he may be considered as a philosophical recluse, a closet-hero. He cannot be denied to possess the *constructive* organ, to have originality and invention in an extraordinary degree: but he does not construct according to nature; his invention is not dramatic. He takes a character or a passion, and works it out to the utmost possible extravagance, and palliates or urges it on by every resource of the understanding, or by every species of plausible sophistry; but in doing this, he may be said to be only spinning a subtle theory, to be maintaining a wild paradox, as much as when he extends a philosophical and abstract principle into all its ramifications, and builds an entire and exclusive system of feeling and action on a single daring view of human nature. 'He sits in the centre' of his web, and 'enjoys' not 'bright day,' but a kind of gloomy grandeur. His characters stand alone, self-created, and self-supported, without communication with, or reaction upon, any other (except in the single instance of Caleb Williams himself):—the passions are not excited, qualified, or irritated by circumstances, but moulded by the will of the writer, like clay in the hands of the potter. Mr. Godwin's imagination works like the power of steam, with inconceivable and incessant expansive force; but it is all in one direction, mechanical and uniform. By its help, he weaves gigantic figures, and unfolds terrific situations; but they are like the cloudy pageantry that hangs over the edge of day, and the prodigious offspring of his brain have neither fellow nor competitor in the scene of his imagination. They require a clear stage to themselves. They do not enter the lists with other men: nor are actuated by the ordinary wheels, pulleys, and machinery of society: they are at issue with themselves, and at war with the nature of things. Falkland, St. Leon, Mandeville, are studies for us to contemplate, not men that we can sympathise with. They move in an orbit of their own, urged on by restless thought and morbid sentiment, on which the antagonist powers of sense, habit, circumstances, and opinion have no influence whatever. The arguments addressed to them are idle and ineffectual. You might as well argue with a madman, or talk to the winds. But this is not the nature of

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dramatic writing. Mr. Godwin, to succeed in tragedy, should compose it almost entirely of long and repeated soliloquies, like the Prometheus of Æschylus; and his dialogues, properly translated, would turn out to be monologues, as we see in the Iron Chest.<sup>1</sup>

The same, or similar, remarks would apply to Mr. Wordsworth's hankering after the drama. We understand, that, like Mr. Godwin, the author of the Lyrical Ballads formerly made the attempt, and did not receive encouragement to proceed. We cannot say positively: but we much suspect that the writer would be for having all the talk to himself. His moody sensibility would eat into the plot like a cancer, and bespeak both sides of the dialogue for its own share. Mr. Wordsworth (we are satisfied with him, be it remembered, as he is), is not a man to go out of himself into the feelings of any one else; much less, to act the part of a variety of characters. He is not, like Bottom, ready to play the lady, the lover, and the lion. His poetry is a virtual proscription passed upon the promiscuous nature of the drama. He sees nothing but himself in the universe: or if he leans with a kindly feeling to any thing else, he would impart to the most uninteresting things the fulness of his own sentiments, and elevate the most insignificant characters into the foremost rank,—before kings, or heroes, or lords, or wits,—because they do not interfere with his own sense of self-importance. He has none of the bye-play, the varying points of view, the venturous magnanimity of dramatic fiction. He thinks the opening of the leaves of a daisy, or the perfume of a hedge (not of a garden) rose, matters of consequence enough for him to notice them; but he thinks the 'daily intercourse of all this unintelligible world,' its cares, its crimes, its noise, love, war, ambition (what else?), mere vanity and vexation of spirit, with which a great poet cannot condescend to disturb the bright, serene, and solemn current of his thoughts. This lofty indifference and contempt for his *dramatis personæ* would not be the most likely means to make them interesting to the audience. We fear Mr. Wordsworth's poetical egotism would prevent his writing a tragedy. Yet we have above made the dissipation and rarefaction of this spirit in society, the bar to dramatic excellence. Egotism is of different sorts; and he would not compliment the literary and artificial state of manners so much, as to suppose it quite free from this principle. But it is not allied at present to imagination or passion. It is sordid, servile, inert, a compound of dulness, vanity, and interest. That which is the source of dramatic excellence, is like a mountain

<sup>1</sup> Miss Baillie has much of the power and spirit of dramatic writing, and not the less because, as a woman, she has been placed out of the vortex of philosophical and political extravagances.

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spring, full of life and impetuosity, sparkling with light, thundering down precipices, winding along narrow defiles ; or

' Like a wild overflow, that sweeps before him  
A golden stack, and with it shakes down bridges,  
Cracks the strong hearts of pines, whose cable roots  
Held out a thousand storms, a thousand thunders,  
And so, made mightier, takes whole villages  
Upon his back, and, in that heat of pride,  
Charges strong towns, towers, castles, palaces,  
And lays them desolate.'

The other sort is a stagnant, gilded puddle. Mr. Wordsworth has measured it from side to side. ' 'Tis three feet long and two feet wide.'—Lord Byron's patrician haughtiness and monastic seclusion are, we think, no less hostile than the levelling spirit of Mr. Wordsworth's Muse, to the endless gradations, variety, and complicated ideas or *mixed modes* of this sort of composition. Yet we have read Manfred.

But what shall we say of Mr. Coleridge, who is the author not only of a successful but a meritorious tragedy? We may say of him what he has said of Mr. Maturin, that he is of the transcendental German school. He is a florid poet, and an ingenious metaphysician, who mistakes scholastic speculations for the intricate windings of the passions, and assigns possible reasons instead of actual motives for the excesses of his characters. He gives us studied special-pleadings for involuntary bursts of feeling, and the needless strain of tinkling sentiments for the point-blank language of nature. His Remorse is a spurious tragedy. Take the following passage, and then ask, whether the charge of sophistry and paradox, and dangerous morality, to startle the audience, in lieu of more legitimate methods of exciting their sympathy, which he brings against the author of Bertram, may not be retorted on his own head. Ordonio is made to defend the project of murdering his brother by such arguments as the following :—

' What? if one reptile sting another reptile,  
Where is the crime? The goodly face of nature  
Hath one disfiguring stain the less upon it.  
Are we not all predestined Transiency,  
And cold Dishonour? Grant it, that this hand  
*Had* given a morsel to the hungry worms  
Somewhat too early—where 's the crime of this?  
That this must needs bring on the idiotcy  
Of moist-eyed Penitence—'tis like a dream!  
Say, I had lay'd a body in the sun!  
Well! in a month there swarm forth from the corse  
A thousand, nay, ten thousand sentient beings

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In place of that one man. Say, I had *killed* him !  
Yet who shall tell me that each one and all  
Of these ten thousand lives is not as happy,  
As that one life, which, being push'd aside,  
Made room for these unnumber'd !'

This is a way in which no one ever justified a murder to his own mind. No one will suspect Mr. Southey of writing a tragedy, nor Mr. Moore either. His Muse is light. Walter Scott excels in the grotesque and the romantic. He gives us that which has been preserved of ancient manners and customs, and barbarous times and characters, and which strikes and staggers the mind the more, by the contrast it affords to the present artificial and effeminate state of society. But we do not know that he could write a tragedy : what he has engrafted of his own in this way upon the actual stock and floating materials of history is, we think, inferior to the general texture of his work. See, for instance, the conclusion of the *Black Dwarf*, where the situation of the parties is as dramatic as possible, and the effect is none at all. It is not a sound inference, that, because parts of a novel are dramatic, the author could write a play. The novelist is dramatic only where he can, and where he pleases ; the other must be so. The first is a *ride and tye* business, like a gentleman leading his horse, or walking by the side of a gig down a hill. We shall not, however, insist farther on this topic, because we are not convinced that the author of *Waverley* could not write a first-rate tragedy, as well as so many first-rate novels. If he can, we wish that he would ; and not leave it to others to mar what he has sketched so admirably as a ground-work for that purpose.

THE HEBREW, IVANHOE, ETC.—We have been led to make these general remarks, partly in consequence of the two new dramas, taken from the romance of *Ivanhoe*, the one called *Ivanhoe* at Covent-garden, and the other under the title of the *Hebrew* at Drury-lane. It argues little for the force or redundance of our original talents for tragic composition, when our authors of that description are periodical pensioners on the bounty of the Scottish press ; and when with all the craving which the public and the Managers feel for novelty in this respect, they can only procure it at second-hand by vamping up with new scenery, decorations, and dresses, what has been already rendered at once sacred and familiar to us in the closet. Mr. Walter Scott no sooner conjures up the Muse of old romance, and brings us acquainted with her in ancient hall, cavern, or mossy dell, than Messrs. Harris and Elliston, with all their tribe, instantly set their tailors to work to take the pattern of the dresses, their artists to paint the wild-wood scenery or some proud dungeon-keep, their

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musicians to compose the fragments of bewildered ditties, and their penmen to connect the author's scattered narrative and broken dialogue into a sort of theatrical join-hand. The thing is not ill got up in general; it fills the coffers of the theatre for a time; gratifies public curiosity till another new novel appears; and probably flatters the illustrious prose-writer, who must be fastidious indeed, if, at the end of each representation, he exclaims with Hamlet, 'I had as lief the town-crier had spoken my lines!'—It has been observed by an excellent judge, that it was next to impossible to spoil a picture of Titian's by copying it. Even the most indifferent wood-cut, a few scratches in an etching, gave something of a superior look of refinement, an air of grace and grandeur; the outline was so true, the disposition of light and shade so masterly in the original, that it could not be quite done away. So it is with these theatrical adaptations: the spirit of the real author shines through them in spite of many obstacles; and about a twentieth part of his genius appears in them, which is enough. His canvas is cut down, to be sure; his characters thinned out, the limbs and extremities of his plot are lopped away (cruel necessity!), and it is like showing a brick for a house. But then what is left is so fine! The author's Muse is 'instinct with fire,' in every part, and the *dissecta membra poetæ*, like the polypus when hacked and hewed asunder, piece together again, or sprout out into new life. The other plays that we have seen taken from this stock are merely selections and transpositions of the borrowed materials: the Hebrew (we mean the principal character itself) is the only excrescence from it; and though fantastic and somewhat feeble, compared with the solid trunk from which it grew, it is still no unworthy ornament to it, like the withered and variegated moss upon the knotted oak.—Of *Ivanhoe* itself, we wish to say a single word, before we proceed to either drama. It is the first attempt of Mr. Scott (we wish the writer would either declare himself, or give himself a *nom de guerre*, that we might speak of him without either a periphrasis or impertinence), it is, we say, Mr. Scott's first attempt on English ground, and it is, we think, only a comparative, but comparatively with himself, a decided failure. There are some few scenes in it, and one or two extraneous characters, equal to what he has before written; but we think they are, *in comparison*, few; and by being so distinctly detached as they are, from the general groundwork (so that no two persons taking the work to dramatise would not pitch upon the same incidents and individuals to bring forward on the stage), shew that the other parts of the story are without proportionable prominence and interest. In the other novels it was not so. The variety, the continued interest,

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the crowded groups, the ever-changing features distracted attention, and perplexed the choice : the difficulty was not what to select, but what to reject. All was new, and all was equally, or nearly equally, good—teeming with life and throbbing with interest. But here, no one, if called upon for a preference, can miss pointing out Friar Tuck in his cell, and the Jew and his daughter Rebecca. These remain, and stand out after the perusal, as above water mark ; when the rest are washed away and forgotten. For want of the same pulse, the same veins of nature circling throughout, the body of the work is cold and colourless. The author does not feel himself at home ; and tries to make up for cordial sympathy and bold action, by the minute details of his subject— by finishing his Saxon draperies, or furbishing up the armour of his Normans, with equal care and indifference—so that we seem turning over a book of antiquarian prints, instead of the pages of an admired novel-writer. In fact, we conceive, as a point of speculative criticism, that the genius of the author of *Waverley*, however lofty, and however extensive, still has certain discernible limits ; that it is strictly national ; that it is traditional ; that it relies on actual manners and external badges of character ; that it insists on costume and dialect ; and is one of individual character and situation, rather than of general nature. This was some time doubtful : but the present work ‘gives evidence of it.’ Compare his *Rob Roy* with *Robin Hood*. What rich Highland blood flows through the veins of the one ; colours his hair, freckles his skin, bounds in his step, swells in his heart, kindles in his eye : what poor waterish puddle creeps through the soul of *Locksley* ; and what a lazy, listless figure he makes in his coat of Lincoln-green, like a figure to let, in the novel of *Ivanhoe* ! Mr. T. Cooke, of the Theatre Royal, Drury-lane, does not make him much more insipid. Mr. Scott slights and slurs our archer good. His imagination mounts with *Rob Roy*, among his native wilds and cliffs, like an eagle to its lordly nest : but it cannot take shelter with *Robin Hood* and *his* crew of outlaws in the Forest of Merry Sherwood : ‘his affections do not that way tend.’ Like a good patriot and an honest man, he feels not the same interest in old English history, as in Scottish tradition ; the one is not bound up with his early impressions, with his local knowledge, with his personal attachments, like the other ; and we may be allowed to say, that our author’s genius soars to its enviable and exclusive height from the depth of his prejudices. He has described Scottish manners, scenery, and history so well, and made them so interesting to others, from his complete knowledge and intense love of his country. Why should we expect him to describe English manners and events as well ? On his native soil, within that

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hallowed circle of his warm affections and his keen observation, no one will pretend to cope with him. He has there a wide and noble range, over which his pen 'holds sovereign sway and masterdom;' to wit, over the Highlands and the Lowlands, and the Tolbooth and the good town of Edinburgh, with 'a far cry to Lochiel,' over gleaming lake and valley, and the bare mountain-path, over all ranks and classes of his countrymen, high and low, and over all that has happened to them for the last five hundred years, recorded in history, tradition, or old song. These he may challenge for himself; and if he throws down his gauntlet, no one but a madman will dare to take it up. But on this side the Tweed we have others as good as he. The genius of that magic stream may say to him, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further.' We have novels and romances of our own as good as *Ivanhoe*; and we will venture to predict, that the more this admirable and all but universal genius extends his rapid and unresisted career on this side the border, the more he will lose in reputation, and in real strength—

'Like kings who lose the conquests gain'd before,  
By vain ambition still to make them more.'

How feeble, how slight, how unsatisfactory and disjointed, did the adaptations from *Guy Mannering*, *Rob Roy*, and the *Antiquary* appear, contrasted with the story we had read! The play of *Ivanhoe* at Covent Garden, on the contrary, seems to give all (or nearly so) that we remember distinctly in the novel; and the Hebrew, which constantly wanders from it, without any apparent object or meaning, yet does so without exciting much indignation or regret. We have in both the scene, the indispensable scene, at the hermitage of Copmanhurst, between the Black Knight and Robin Hood's jolly Friar (which, however, has not half the effect on the stage that it has in reading, though Mr. Emery plays the Friar, and sings a jolly stave for him admirably well at Covent Garden)—we have the trial of Rebecca, and the threat to put her father to the torture, almost carried into execution at the castle of Torquilstone; we have the siege and demolition of the castle itself; we have the fair Rowena at one house, in her own proper shape; and at the other, metamorphosed into the fairer and more lovely Israelite; and at both we have Cedric the Saxon, Gurth the swineherd, and Wamba the jester, and Brian de Bois-Guilbert; and what more would any one require in reason? The details, however, of all these personages and transactions are much more accurately given, and more skilfully connected in *Ivanhoe* than in the Hebrew, and the former play is better got up than the latter, in all the characters,

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with the exception of one, which it is needless to mention. Yet, why should we not, envy apart? Mr. Farren played Isaac of York, well; Mr. Kean played the Hebrew still better. As for the rest, Charles Kemble played the same character at one house that Mr. Penley, Jun. did at the other: Mr. Emery was Friar Tuck at Covent-Garden, Mr. Oxberry at Drury Lane: Mr. Macready was Sir Reginald Front de Bœuf, a character exactly fitted for his impetuous action, and his smothered tremulous tones, which we cannot say of his other representative, Mr. Hamblin, though we have nothing to say against him: Miss Foote looked the beautiful Rebecca (all but the raven locks and dark eye-lashes) which Mrs. West played but insipidly, with Miss Carew to help her: and Mrs. Fawcett was the wretched, but terrific daughter of the race of Torquilstone, a character omitted at the other house. As a literary composition, we have nothing to offer on *Ivanhoe*; but the Hebrew (which is published, and which is from the pen of Mr. Soane, the author of some former pieces which have been well received), requires a word or two of remark. As a play, it is ill-constructed, without proportion or connection. As a poem, it has its beauties, and those we think neither mean nor few. It is disjointed, without dramatic decorum, and sometimes even to a ludicrous degree: as where a principal hero, on hearing the sound of a horn or trumpet, jumps on a table to look out of a window, and receives an arrow in his breast from one of the besiegers, on which he is carried out apparently lifeless; and yet he is presently after introduced again, as well as if no such accident had happened. But notwithstanding this, and many other errors of the same kind, and a weakness and languor in the general progress of the story, there are individual touches of nature and passion, which we can account for in no other way so satisfactorily as by imagining the author to be a man of genius. The flowers of poetry interspersed were often sad, but beautiful—

‘Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe’—

the turns and starts of passion in feeble and wronged old age, were often delicate and striking. Among these we might mention the Jew’s comparison of his own feelings on receiving an unexpected kindness, to the cold and icy current of the river frozen by the winter, but melting in the genial warmth of the sun: his refusal, in the wanderings of his intellect, to go to witness his daughter’s death in company with any one else: ‘No; thou art not my child, I’ll go alone:’ and the fine conception of his hearing, in the deep and silent abstraction of his despair (before any one else), the sound of the trampling of the champion’s steed, who comes to rescue her

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from destruction, which is, however, nearly ruined and rendered ridiculous by Mr. Penley's running in with armour on from the farthest end of the stage, as fast as his legs can carry him. Upon the whole, this character, compared to the rough draught in the novel, is like a curiously finished miniature, done after a bold and noble design. For the dark, massy beard, and coarse weather-beaten figure, which we attribute to Isaac of York, we have a few sprinkled grey hairs, and the shrivelled, tottering frame of the Hebrew; and Mr. Kean's acting in it, in several places, was such as to terrify us when we find from the play-bills that he is soon to act Lear. Of the two plays, we would then recommend it to our readers to go to see *Ivanhoe* at Covent Garden: but for ourselves, we would rather see the Hebrew a second time at Drury Lane, though every time we go there it costs us three and sixpence more than at the other house—a serious sum! Notwithstanding this repeated and heavy defalcation from our revenue, which really hurts our vanity not less than our interest, we must do the Manager the justice to say, that we never laughed more heartily than we did at his *Sir Charles* and *Lady Racket* the other night. 'Unkindness may do much,' but it is not a little matter that will hinder us from laughing as long and as loud as any body, 'to the very top of our lungs,' at so rich a treat as *Three Weeks after Marriage*. Mr. Elliston never shines to more advantage than in light, genteel farce, after Mr. Kean's tragedy. 'Do you think I'll sleep with a woman that doesn't know what's trumps?' It was irresistible. It might have been *encored* with few dissentient voices, and with no greater violation of established custom than the distributing three different performers, Mr. Connor, Mr. Yates, and Mrs. Davenport, in the pit and boxes, to hold a dialogue with a person on the stage, in the introductory interlude of *The Manager in Distress* at Covent Garden. We, however, do not object to this novelty, if nobody else does, and if it is not repeated; and it certainly did not put us in an ill humour for seeing Mr. Jones's *Too Late for Dinner*. Mr. Jones is much such an author as he is an actor—wild, but agreeable, going all lengths without making much progress, determined to please, and succeeding by dint of noise, bustle, whim, and nonsense. There is neither much plot, nor much point in the new farce; but it tells, and keeps the house laughing by a sort of absurd extravagance and good humour. Besides, Mr. Jones plays in it himself, and exerts himself with his wonted alacrity; so do Mr. Liston, Mr. Emery, Mrs. Davenport, and Miss Foote. The author has, indeed, cut out a cockney character for Liston (who is the *Magnus Apollo* of farce writers), as good as our old friend Lubin

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Log ; and the scene in which he comes in stuffing buns, and talking at the same time, till he nearly chokes himself in the double operation, is one that would do for Hogarth to paint, if he were alive ; or, as he is not, for Mr. Wilkie. Emery is a country bumpkin, who is learning French, to fit himself for travel into foreign parts ; and his Yorkshire dialect and foreign jargon, jumbled together, have a very odd effect. But Mr. Emery's acting, we are sorry to say, is not a subject for criticism : it is always just what it ought to be ; and it is impossible to praise it sufficiently, because there is never any opportunity for finding fault with it. To criticise him, would be like criticising the countryman, who carried the pig under his cloak. He is always the very character he undertakes to represent ; we mean, in his favourite and general cast of acting.

### THE DRAMA : No. V

*The London Magazine.*

May, 1820.

WE don't know where to begin this article—whether with Mr. Matthews and his Country Cousins ; or with Harlequin *versus* Shakespear ; or Cinderella and the Little Glass Slipper ; or the story of Goody Two-Shoes and the Fate of Calas, at the Summer Theatre of Sadler's Wells ; or with Mr. Booth's Lear, which we have seen with great pleasure ; or with Mr. Kean's, which is a greater pleasure to come (so we anticipate), and which we see is put off to the last moment, lest, we suppose, as the play-bills announce, ' the immortal Shakespear should meet with opponents.' And why should the immortal Shakespear meet with opponents in this case ? Nobody can tell. But to prevent so terrible and unlooked-for a catastrophe, and to protect the property of the theatre at so alarming a crisis from cries of ' fire,' the Manager has thought it his duty ' to suspend the Free List during the representation, the public press excepted.' As we have not the mortification of the exclusion, nor the benefit of the exception, we care little about the matter, but as a curiosity in theatrical diplomacy. The anxiety of the Manager about the double trust committed to him, the property of a great theatre, and the fame of a great poet, is exemplary ; and the precautions he uses for their preservation, no less admirable and efficacious :—so that, if the tragedy of King Lear should pass muster for a night or two, without suffering the greatest indignities, it will be owing to the *suspension of the Free List* : if Mr. Kean should ride triumphant in a sea of passion, the king of sorrows, and drown his audience in a flood of tears, it will be owing to the *suspension of the Free List* : if the heart-rending

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tragedy of the immortal bard, as it was originally written, does not meet with the same untoward fate as the speaking pantomime of the late Mr. Garrick deceased, 'altered by a professional gentleman of great abilities,' it will be owing to the *suspension of the Free List*. In a word, if the glory of the 'great heir of fame' does not totter to its base at the representation of his noblest work, nor the property of the theatre tumble about our ears the very first night, we shall have to thank Mr. Elliston's timely care in the *suspension of the Free List*! 'Strange that an old poet's memory should be as mortal as a new manager's wits!' This bold anticipation and defiance of opposition, where none can be expected, is not very politic, though it may be very valiant. It is bringing into litigation an unencumbered estate (we mean that part of it relating to the character of Shakespear) of which we are in full and quiet possession. It is not only waking the sleeping lion, but kicking him. Mr. Elliston's shutting his doors in the face of the Free List is like Don Quixote's throwing open the cages of the wild beasts in the caravan, and insisting that they should come out and fight him. If the Free List were that formidable and ill-disposed body of sworn foes to Shakespear, that 'tasteless monster that the world ne'er saw,' and into which the manager's officious zeal for the interests of the theatre would convert them, it were best to let them alone, and not court their hostility by invidious and impracticable disqualifications. If they are determined to *damn* Shakespear, there is no help for it: if they hold no such antipathy to him, 'if that they love the gentle bard,' why should their 'unhoused, free condition, be put in circumscription and confine,' during the Manager's pleasure? We are in no great pain for the deathless renown of Shakespear: but we really entertain apprehensions that these Berlin and Milan decrees (in imitation of a great man) which our arbitrary theatrical dictator is in the habit of issuing at the bottom of his play-bills, may be of no service to the life-renters of Drury-lane. We hear a report (which we do not believe, and shall be happy to contradict) that the Drury Lane Management have put in a claim to the exclusive representation of Lear, and have proposed to suspend the performance at the other house. This we think too much, even for the gratuitous and imposing pretensions of Mr. Elliston. We shall, at this rate, soon see stuck up about the town, — 'Shakespear performed at this theatre, for a few nights only, by permission of the Manager of Drury Lane!' Why, this would be a sweeping clause indeed, a master-stroke at the liberty of the stage. It cannot be. It is 'as if he would confine the interminable.' He may seat himself in the manager's chair, like the lady in the lobster, but the tide of Shakespear's genius must be allowed to take its full

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scope, and overflow, like the Nile, the banks on either side of Russell Street. Our poet is national, not private property. The *quondam* proprietor of the Circus cannot catch this mighty Proteus to make a Harlequin of him: it is not in the bond, that he should not now let any one else but Mr. Kean play Shakespear, as he once objected to let it play at all! We suspect this idle report must have arisen, not from any hint of an injunction, on the part of Mr. Elliston, against 'a beard so old and white' as Mr. Booth's; but as a critical reproof to the Covent-Garden Managers, for reviving Nahum Tate's Lear, instead of the original text; and as a friendly suggestion to them instantly to deprive Cordelia of her lover—and to exclude the Free List '*lest the immortal Shakespear should meet with opponents!*' But we have said enough on this ridiculous subject.

We proceed to another; Mr. Matthews's Country Cousins. This is the third season that this gentleman has entertained the town successfully, and we trust profitably to himself, by a *mélange* of imitations, songs, narrative, and ventriloquism, entirely of his own getting up. For one man to be able to amuse the public, or, as the phrase is, to *draw houses*, night after night, by a display of his own resources and feats of comic dexterity alone, shews great variety and piquancy of talent. The Country Cousins is popular, like the rest: the audiences are, at this present speaking, somewhat thinner, but they do not laugh the less. We do not regret that Mr. Matthews has been transferred from the common stage to a stage of his own. He himself complained, at first (as the cause of this removal), that he had not regular opportunities afforded him at Covent Garden for appearing in legitimate comedy, which was the chief object of his study and his ambition. If it were not the most ridiculous of all things to expect self-knowledge from any man, this ground of complaint would be sufficiently curious. Mr. Matthews was seldom or never put into any characters but those of mimicry and burlesque by the managers of Covent Garden: into what characters has he put himself since he has been upon his own hands? why, seldom or never into any but those of mimicry and burlesque. We remember on some former occasion throwing out a friendly discouragement of Mr. Matthews's undertaking the part of Rover in Wild Oats (as not exactly fitted to his peculiar cast of acting), which we had reason to think was not received in good part: yet how did he himself propose to make it palatable, and how did he really contrive to make it tolerable, to the audience?—By the introduction of Imitations of all the actors on the London boards. It is not easy to give a character of a man (without making a fool of him) with which he

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shall be satisfied : but actors are in general so infatuated with applause, or sore from disappointment, that they are, of all men, the least accessible to reason. We critics are a sort of people whom they very strangely look upon as in a state of natural hostility with them. A person who undertakes to give an account of the acted drama in London, may be supposed to be led to this by some fondness for, and some knowledge of, the stage : here then ' there 's sympathy ' between the actor and the critic. He praises the good, he holds out a warning to the bad. The last may have cause to complain, but the first do not thank you a bit the more. You cheer them in the path of glory, shew them where to pluck fresh laurels, or teach them to shun the precipice, on which their hopes may be dashed to pieces : you devote your time and attention to them ; are romantic, gay, witty, profound in adorning their art with every embellishment you have in store to make it interesting to others ; you occupy the eyes and ears of the town with their names and affairs ; weigh their merits and defects in daily, weekly, monthly scales, with as much preparation and formality as if the fate of the world depended on their failure or success ; and yet they seem to suppose that your whole business and only object are to degrade and vilify them in public estimation. What you say in praise of any individual, is set down to the score of his merit : what you say of others, in common justice to yourself, is considered as a mere effusion of spleen, stupidity, and spite—as if you took a particular pleasure in torturing their feelings. Yet, upon second thoughts, there may be some ground for all this. We do not like to have a physician feel our pulse, shake his head, and prescribe a regimen : many persons have objection to sit for their pictures, and there is, perhaps, something in the very fact of being criticised, to which human nature is not easily reconciled. To have every word you speak scanned, every look scrutinised,—never to be sure whether you are right or wrong ; to have it said that this was too high, that too low ; to be abused by one person for the very same thing that another ' applauds you to the very echo, that does applaud again ; ' to have it hinted that one's very best effort only just wanted something to make it perfect ; and that certain other parts which we thought tolerable, were not to be endured ; to be taken in pieces in this manner, turned inside out, to be had up at a self-elected tribunal of impertinence,—tried, condemned, and acquitted every night,—to hear the solemn defence, the ridiculous accusation,—to be subjected to a living anatomy,—to be made the text of a perpetual running commentary,—to be set up in an antithesis, to be played upon in an alliteration,—to have one's faults separated from one's virtues, like the sheep from the goats by the good shepherd,—to be shorn bare

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and have a mark set upon one,—to be bewitched and bedevilled by the critics,—to lie at the mercy of every puny whipster, and not be suffered to know whether one stands on one's head or one's heels till he tells one how—has, to be sure, something very perplexing and very provoking in it; and it is not so much to be wondered at that the subjects of this kind of critical handling undergo the operation with so little patience as they do. They particularly hate those writers who pretend to patronize them, for this takes away even the privilege of resentment.

An actor, again, is seldom satisfied with being extolled for what he is, unless you admire him for being what he is not. A great tragic actress thinks herself particularly happy in comedy, and it is a sort of misprision of treason not to say so. Your pen may grow wanton in praise of the broad farcical humour of a low comedian; but if you do not cry him up for the fine gentleman, he threatens to leave the stage. Most of our best comic performers came out in tragedy as their favourite line; and Mr. Matthews does not think it enough to enliven a whole theatre with his powers of drollery, and whim, and personal transformation, unless by way of preface and apology he first delivers an epitaph on those talents for the legitimate drama which were so prematurely buried at Covent Garden Theatre!—If we were to speak our minds, we should say, that Mr. Matthews shines particularly, neither as an actor, nor a mimic of actors, but that his *forte* is a certain general tact, and versatility of comic power. You would say, he is a clever performer: you would guess he is a cleverer man. His talents are not pure, but mixed. He is best when he is his own prompter, manager, and performer, orchestra, and scene-shifter; and, perhaps, to make the thing complete, the audience should be of his own providing too.—If we had never known any thing more of Mr. Matthews than the account we have heard of his imitating the interior of a German family, the wife lying a-bed grumbling at her husband's staying out, the husband's return home drunk, and the little child's *padding* across the room to get to its own bed as soon as it hears him, we should set him down for a man of genius. These felicitous strokes are, however, casual and intermittent in him:—they proceed from him rather by chance than design, and are followed up by others equally gross and superficial. Mr. Matthews wants taste, or has been spoiled by the taste of the town, whom 'he must live to please, and please to live.' His talent, though limited, is of a lively and vigorous fibre; capable of a succession of shifts and disguises; he is *up to* a number of good things—single hits here and there; but by the suddenness and abruptness of his turns, he surprises and shocks oftener than he satisfies. His wit

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does not move the muscles of the mind, but, like some practical joker, gives one a good rap on the knuckles, or a lively box on the ear. He serves up a *pic-nic* entertainment of scraps and odd ends (some of them, we must say, old ones). He is like a host, who will not let us swallow a mouthful, but offers us something else, and directly after brings us the same dish again. He is in a continual hurry and disquietude to please, and destroys half the effect by trying to increase it. He is afraid to trust for a moment to the language of nature and character, and wants to translate it into pantomime and grimace, like a writing-master, who for the letter *I* has the hieroglyphic of an eye staring you in the face. Mr. Matthews may be said to have taken tythe of half the talents of the stage and of the town; yet his variety is not always charming. There is something dry and meagre in his jokes: they do not lard the lean earth as he walks; but seem as if they might be written upon parchment. His humour, in short, is not like digging into a fine Stilton cheese, but is more like the scrapings of Shapsugar.—As an actor, we think he cannot rise higher than a waiter (certainly not a dumb one), or than Mr. Wiggins. In this last character, in particular, by a certain panic-struck expression of countenance at the persecution of which the hen-pecked husband is the victim, and by the huge unwieldy helplessness of his person, unable to escape from it and from the rabble of boys at his heels, he excites shouts of laughter, and hits off the humour of the thing to an exact perfection. In general, his performance is of that kind which implies manual dexterity, or an assumption of bodily defect, rather than mental capacity: take from Mr. Matthews's drollest parts an odd shuffle in the gait, a restless volubility of speech and motion, a sudden suppression of features, or the continual repetition of some cant phrase with unabated vigour, and you reduce him to almost total insignificance, and a state of still life. He is not therefore like—

'A clock that wants both hands,  
As useless when it goes as when it stands:'

for only keep him going, and he bustles about the stage to some purpose. As a mimic of other actors, Mr. Matthews fails as often as he succeeds (we call it a failure, when it is with difficulty we can distinguish the person intended), and when he succeeds, it is more by seizing upon some peculiarity, or exaggerating some defect, than by hitting upon the true character or prominent features. He gabbles like Incledon, or croaks like Suett, or lisps like Young; but when he attempts the expressive silver-tongued cadences of John Kemble, it is the shadow of a shade. If we did not know the contrary, we

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should suppose he had never heard the original, but was imitating some one who had. His best imitations are taken from something characteristic or absurd that has struck his fancy, or occurred to his observation in real life—such as a chattering footman, a drunken coachman, a surly traveller, or a garrulous old Scotchwoman. This last we would fix upon as Mr. Matthews's *chef-d'œuvre*. It was a portrait of common nature, equal to Wilkie or Teniers—as faithful, as simple, as delicately humorous, and with a slight dash of pathos; but without one particle of caricature, of vulgarity, or ill-nature. We see no reason why the ingenious artist should not show his Country Cousins a gallery of such portraits, and of no others, once a year. 'He might exhibit it every night for a month, and we should go to see it every night!'<sup>1</sup> What has impressed itself on our memory as the next best thing to this exquisite piece of genuine painting, was the broad joke of the abrupt proposal of a mutton-chop to the man who is sea-sick, and the convulsive marks of abhorrence with which it is received. The representation also of the tavern-beau in the Country Cousins, who is about to swallow a lighted-candle for a glass of brandy and water, as he is going drunk to bed, is well feigned and admirably humoured; with many more, too long to mention. It is more to our performer's credit to suppose that the songs which he sings with such rapidity and vivacity of effect are not of his own composing; and, as to his ventriloquism, it is yet in its infancy. The fault of these exhibitions that which appears 'first, midst, and last' in them, is that they turn too much upon caricaturing the most common-place and worn-out topics of ridicule—the blunders of Frenchmen in speaking English,—the mispronunciations of the cockney dialect, the ignorance of Country Cousins, and the impertinence and foppery of relations in town. It would seem too likely from the uniform texture of these pieces, that Mr. Matthews had passed his whole time in climbing to the top of the Monument, or had never been out of a tavern, or a stage-coach, a Margate-hoy or a Dover packet-boat. We do not deny the merit of some of the cross-readings out of the two languages; but certainly we think the quantity of French and English jargon put into the mouths of French and English travellers all through these imitations, must lessen their popularity instead of increasing it, as two-thirds of Mr. Matthews's auditors, we should imagine, cannot know the point on which the jest turns. We grant that John Bull is always very willing to laugh at Mounseer, if he knew why or how—perhaps, even without know-

<sup>1</sup> We have given this sentence in marks of quotation, and yet it is our own. We should put a stop to the practices of 'such petty larceny rogues'—but that it is not worth while.

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ing how or why! But we thought many of the jokes of this kind, however well contrived or intended, miscarried in their passage through the pit, and long before they reached the two shilling gallery.

A new pantomime, called *Shakspear versus Harlequin*, has been produced at Drury-lane Theatre. It is called 'a speaking pantomime : ' we had rather it had said nothing. It is better to act folly than to talk it. The heels and wand and motley coat of Harlequin are sacred to nonsense ; but the words, the cap and wings of Mercury (who was here also made the representative of Shakspear) are worthy of a better use. The essence of pantomime is practical absurdity, keeping the wits in constant chase, coming upon one by surprise, and starting off again before you can arrest the fleeting phantom : the essence of this piece was prosing stupidity remaining like a mawkish fixture on the stage, and overcoming your impatience by the force of *ennui*. A speaking pantomime (such as this one) is not unlike a flying waggon : but we do not want a pantomime to move in minuet-time, nor to have Harlequin's light wand changed into a leaden mace. If we must have a series of shocks and surprises, of violations of probability, common sense, and nature, to keep the brain and senses in a whirl, let us, at least, have them hot and hot, let them 'charge on heaps, that we may lose distinction in *absurdity*,' and not have time to doze and yawn over them, in the intervals of the battle. The bringing Harlequin to the test of reason resembles the old story of hedging in the cuckoo, and surpasses the united genius of the late Mr. Garrick (to whom this dull farce is ascribed) and of the professional gentleman who has fitted the above productions of 'the olden times' (*viz.* those of the late Mr. Garrick) to modern taste ! After all, though Harlequin is tried by three grave judges, who are very unnecessarily metamorphosed into three old women, no competition, no collision takes place between him and the genius of Shakspear, unless Mr. T. Cooke's playing very cleverly on a variety of musical instruments, so as to ravish the heart of Miss Dolly Snip (Madame Vestris) can be construed into so many proofs of the superiority of Shakspear's Muse ! Again, Mr. Harley, as Harlequin, and Mr. Oxberry (as a country clown) get up into a tree to see the sport, from which it was as difficult to dislodge them as owls from an ivy-bush ; and the sport is to see Joey Snip, the tailor, have his head cut off, and walk with it about the stage, and, unlike the sign of the good woman, talk without his tongue. The slicing off a blackamoor's head or two with the stroke of a scymitar, provided the thing is done quickly, and instantly got out of sight, we do not much object to ; but we do not like to have a ghastly spectre of this sort placed before us for a whole evening, as the heads of the rebel Scotch lords were

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stuck on Temple-bar for half a century. It may be well said indeed, *Quod sic mihi ostendis incredulus odi*. Perhaps this exhibition of posthumous horror and impertinence might be meant as a sly hit at the ghost of Hamlet.

' See o'er the stage the ghost of *Munden* stalks.'

If so, we cry the Manager mercy. We must add, that the strength of the theatre was put in requisition for this piece, and if it could have been saved, it would. Miss Tree, to enliven so many dreary objects, danced a *pas seul*. We would rather see this young lady dance round a may-pole at a country wake or fair.

' But thou, oh Hope, with eyes so fair,  
What was thy enchanting measure?  
Still it whisper'd promised pleasure,  
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail : '—

We could not help repeating these lines as we saw the youngest of the Miss Dennetts, the tallest of the three, resume the part of Cinderella at Covent Garden,—restored, like Psyche, to her late-lost home, and transformed by the little hump-backed fairy, from a poor house-maid to a bright princess, drinking pleasure and treading air. This is a consummation more devoutly to be wished than the changing of a pipkin into a sign-post, or a wheel-barrow into a china-shop. A Fairy Tale is the true history of the human heart—it is a dream of youth realised! How many country-girls have fancied themselves princesses, nay, what country-girl ever was there that, some time or other, did not? A Fairy Tale is what the world would be, if every one had their wishes or their deserts, if our power and our passions were equal. We cannot be at a loss for a thousand bad translations of the story of Cinderella, if we look around us in the boxes. But the real imitation is on the stage. If we could always see the flowers open in the spring, or hear soft music, or see Cinderella dance, or dream we did, life itself would be a Fairy Tale. If the three Miss Dennetts are a little less like one another than they were, on the other hand, we must say that Miss Eliza Dennett (what a pretty name) is much improved, combines a little cluster of graces in her own person, and 'in herself sums all delight.' She has learned to add precision to ease, and firmness of movement to the utmost harmony of form. In the scene where Cinderella is introduced at court and is led out to dance by the enamoured prince, she bows as if she had a diadem on her head, moves as if she had just burst from fetters of roses, folds her arms as the vine curls its tendrils, and hurries from the scene, after the loss of her faithless slipper, as if she had to run a race with the winds. We had only one thing to desire,

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that she and her lover, instead of the new ballet, had danced the Minuet de la Cour with the Gavot, as they do in the Dansomanie; that we might have called the Minuet de la Cour divine, and the Gavot heavenly, and exclaimed once more, with more than artificial rapture—‘Such were the joys of our dancing days!’ We do not despair of seeing this alteration adopted, as our recommendations are sometimes attended to: and in that case we shall feel—But the mechanical anticipation of an involuntary burst of sentiment in supposed circumstances is in vile taste, and we leave it to lords and pettifoggers. We hate to copy them: but we like to steal from Spenser. Here is a passage descriptive of dancing, and of the delights of love, of youth, and beauty which sometimes surround it, and of the eternal echo which they leave in the ear of fancy. The Managers of Covent-Garden may perhaps apply it to their own enchanted palace: we have nothing to do with the passage but to quote it.

‘They say that Venus, when she did dispose  
Herself to pleasure, used to resort  
Unto this place, and therein to repose  
And rest herself as in a gladsome port,  
Or with the Graces there to play and sport:  
That even her own Cytheron, though in it  
She used most to keep her royal court,  
And in her sovereign majesty to sit,  
She in regard hereof refus’d and thought unfit.

Unto this place, when as the Elfin knight  
Approach’d, him seemed that the merry sound  
Of a shrill pipe he playing heard on hight,  
And many feet fast thumping th’ hollow ground,  
That through the woods their echo did rebound.  
He nigher drew to weet what it mote be:  
There he a troop of ladies dancing found  
Full merrily, and making gladful glee,  
And in the midst a shepherd piping he did see.

All they without were ranged in a ring,  
And danced round; but in the midst of them  
Three other ladies did both dance and sing,  
The whilst the rest them round about did hem,  
And like a girlond did encompass them,  
And in the midst of those same three was placed  
Another damsel, as a precious gem,  
Amidst a ring most richly well enchaced,  
That with her goodly presence all the rest much graced.

Look how the crown which Ariadne wore  
Upon her ivory forehead, that same day  
That Theseus her unto her bridal bore  
(When the bold Centaurs made that bloody fray

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With the fierce Lapiths that did him dismay),  
Being now placed in the firmament,  
Through the bright heaven doth her beams display,  
And is unto the stars an ornament;  
Which round her move in order excellent.

Such was the beauty of this goodly band,  
Whose sundry shape were here too long to tell :  
But she that in the midst of them did stand,  
Seem'd all the rest in beauty to excel,  
Crown'd with a rosy girlond, that right well  
Did her bescem. And ever as the crew  
About her danc'd, sweet flow'rs that far did smell,  
And fragrant odours, they upon her threw,  
But most of all, those three did her with gifts endue.

Those were the Graces, daughters of delight,  
Handmaids of Venus, which are wont to haunt  
Upon this hill, and dance there day and night :  
Those three to men all gifts of grace do grant ;  
And all that Venus in herself doth vaunt,  
Is borrowed of them. But that fair one,  
That in the midst was placed paravant,  
Was she to whom that shepherd piped alone,  
That made him pipe so merrily, as never none.'

*Faery Queen*, Book VI. Canto 10.

On the subject of the pantomime and the miscellaneous Drama, we have two words to add, *viz.* that we have been to see the Heart of Midlothian at the Surrey Theatre, of which we spoke by hearsay in our last but one, and which answered our warmest expectations ; and that we took a pleasant stroll up to the Aquatic Theatre of Sadler's Wells, and after dining at the Sir Hugh Middleton's Head, saw a very pretty play-house, Goody Two Shoes, the Monastery, and the Fate of Calas. Goody Two Shoes was played first, on the evening we were there, because Mr. Grimaldi and Mr. Barnes were in it, and they were obliged afterwards to perform in the pantomime at Covent Garden. Did Miss Vallancy go with them ? Otherwise, we should like to have seen her again in the course of the evening. All that we could see to praise in the Monastery was its faithfulness to the original, and the acting of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley. We hope that under the management of a gentleman (Mr. Howard Paine) so well acquainted with both departments of his undertaking, the literary and dramatic, this theatre will soon flourish in all the pride of summer. We had nearly omitted to notice a new Hamlet, that came out at Drury-lane a few weeks ago, who, it appeared to us, would have made the prettiest Hamlet we have seen, if he had been only equal to the part. Indeed he looked it to perfection ; he had an elegant

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figure with a thoughtful face; and on the ordinary conduct and conception of the character, was at once the gentleman and scholar. In the more declamatory and impassioned scenes, however, his voice totally broke down under him, and he did not repeat the part as was given out; for he was the next morning pierced through with the feathered arrows of criticism, as if his breast had been a target. The gentlemen-critics of the daily press have not, in general, their cue on the first night of a performer's appearance. If he fails, they fall upon him without mercy; if he succeeds, they are almost afraid to say so, lest others should say that they were wrong. They pretend (some of them) to lead public opinion and yet have no opinion of their own. They dare not boldly and distinctly declare their opinion of a new dramatic experiment, and the reason is, their convictions are not clear enough to warrant their placing any confidence in them, till they are confirmed by being put to the vote. The first quality of a good critic is courage; but mental courage, like bodily, is the result of conscious strength. Some of the Vampyre crew, indeed, retreat from the dimness and inanity of their perceptions, into the solid darkness of their prejudices, and the crude consistence of their ever-rankling spite; and, in that strong-hold of dirt and cob-webs, are impervious to every ray of sense or reason. We might leave them, if they had themselves been contented to remain, in their narrow, gloomy cells, the proper hiding-place of ignorance and bigotry; but when they come out into the blaze of noon,

'Shut their blue-fringed lids, and hold them close,  
And hooting at the glorious sun in heaven,  
Cry out, where is it?'—

it is time to stop their ominous flight, and send them back to that life of sloth and pride, where the poison of dull-eyed envy preys only upon itself.

There was a want of proper spirit and gallantry shown the other day in the critical reception of Mr. Booth's *Lear*. It was not thought that he would make any thing of it, and therefore it was not said that he did. Because he was on his trial, he was not to have a hearing. Because he was *not* 'the most favoured actor of the day,' he was to have no favour at all shewn him. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*. When Mr. Booth does nothing but make wry faces and odd harsh noises in a character, in imitation of Mr. Kean, we will say, that he does it ill: but when he plays it as he did *Lear*, we will say that he does it not ill, but well, and that in prejudging him, we have been mistaken. It does not lessen Mr. Macready in our opinion, that (as we understand) he refused this character in obstinate despair of doing it

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justice : but if this was a proof of modesty and judgment in him, it certainly ought to raise our idea of Mr. Booth's talents, that he was able to get through it in the way he did. Where failure would have been so fatal and so marked, it was a sufficient triumph even to a proud ambition not to fail. If the part in our adventurous actor's hands wanted something of the breadth and majesty of Lear, it did not want for life or spirit, or a human interest. If he did not give the torrent and whirlwind of the passion, he had plenty of its gusts and flaws. Without his crown, or even the faded image of one, circling his brow, he bustled about the stage with a restlessness and impetuosity of feeling that kept expectation continually awake and gratified the attention which had been so excited. There was no feebleness, and no vulgarity in any part of Mr. Booth's acting, but it was animated, vigorous, and pathetic throughout. The audience, we are sure, the first night, thought and felt as we did. In the exclamation, 'I am every inch a king,' his energy rose to dignity : again, in his reiteration of Gloucester's epithet of 'the *fiery* Duke,' applied to his son-in-law, his manifest impatience, and increasing irritability, showed that Mr. Booth had felt the full force of that beautiful passage in which his own half-conscious infirmity is played off so finely on the ill-fated old king ; and in the scenes with Edgar as mad Tom, where his wits begin to unsettle, the distraction and alienation of his mind, wandering from its own thoughts to catch hold of a clue less painful, and yet broken and entangled like them, were pourtrayed with equal skill and delicacy. In the more set speeches, as in the curse on his daughters, Mr. Booth, we thought, comparatively failed ; but where action was to come in aid of the sentiment and point the meaning, he was almost uniformly correct and impressive. In fact, it is only when the poet's language is explained by the comment of gesture or some sudden change of look, or situation—that is, when tragedy is enlivened by pantomime, that it becomes intelligible to the greater part of the audience ; and we do not see how an actor can be supposed to do those things well which are almost abstractions in his art, and in which he is not encouraged by the sympathy or corrected by the judgment of his hearers. We observed, that the finest touches of thought, of poetry and nature in this play, which were not set off by the accompaniment of show and bustle, passed in profound silence, and without the smallest notice. The sublimity of repose is one in which our play-house frequenters do not seem to be proficient, and the players may be excused, if they do not always cultivate (as we might wish) this occult and mysterious branch of their profession. Of Mr. C. Kemble's Edgar we cannot speak in terms of too high praise. In the supposed mad-scenes, his conception and delivery of

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the part excited the warmest approbation; his fine face and figure admirably relieved the horror of the situations; and, whenever we see Mad Tom played (which is not often), we should wish to see it played by him. The rest of the play was very respectably got up, and all we could object to was the interspersion of the love-scenes by Tate. The happy ending, and the triumph and dotage of the poor old king in repeating again and again, 'Cordelia's Queen, Cordelia's Queen,' were perhaps allowable concessions to the feelings of the audience.

HENRI QUATRE.—There are two lines in a modern poem which we often repeat to ourselves—

' 'Twas Lancelot of the Lake, a bright romance,  
That like a trumpet made young spirits dance : '

and we were much disposed to apply them to this romantic, light and elegant drama. We prophesy that the Managers and the public have a splendid career before them for the season. *This will do.* We saw it in the first opening scene, a view near Paris, the clearest, the most sparkling, the most vivid we ever saw. 'Ah! brilliant land! ah! sunny, cloudless skies! Not all the ink, that has been shed to blacken thee, can blot thy shining face! Not all the blood that has been spilt to enslave thee can choke up thy living breath!' If we can thus be transported to another and a gayer region, and made to drink the warmth and lustre of another climate by the painter's magic art, what can we desire more?—What the pencil had in this case done, the poet's pen did not undo: what the author had written, the actors did not spoil. They *do* order these things well at Covent Garden. We never saw a piece better got up in all its parts, nor one more adapted to the taste of the town in scenery, in dresses, in songs, in passing allusions, in popular sentiments; nor one that went off with less *ennui*, or with more continual bursts of flattering applause. The writing (as far as it was French) was, as might be expected, lively and sentimental: as far as we could perceive Mr. Morton to have had a hand in it, it consisted of strong touches of obvious nature, and showed a perfect understanding with the actors and the audience. The characters were strikingly conceived, and admirably sustained. Mr. Macready's Henri Quatre was (we think) his very happiest effort. There was an originality, a raciness in it that hit our palates. With something, nay, with much of the stiffness and abruptness of one of 'the invincible knights of old,' used to march in rusty armour, there was at the same time the ease, the grace and gallantry of an accomplished courtier. 'He is ten times handsomer,' says the fair Jocrisse, 'than Uncle Jervais,' and according to her husband's

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comment, 'Handsome is that handsome does.' There was a spirit of kindness blended with authority in his tones and in his actions; he was humane, and yet a king and a soldier. Some of the sentiments put into his mouth were worthy of the attention of princes, if they had time for serious reflection, and called forth loud and repeated plaudits. Henry professed his desire to reign by love not fear in the hearts of his subjects; and quoted a saying of his mother's on the mode of effecting this purpose, that 'a pound of honey would draw more flies than a ton of vinegar.' We seemed suddenly and unaccountably carried back to the heroic times of camps and courts, in the company of this good-natured, high-spirited, old-fashioned monarch, and his favourite counsellor, Sully, a pattern of sound thinking and plain-speaking, who was characteristically represented by Mr. Egerton. It is his business to prevent the king from doing anything wrong,—'no sinecure,' as he honestly declares. We like these bitter jests; and we found that others were of our thinking, though they flew about as thick as hail. We should have thought this piece more likely to have been imported from Spain than France, at the present crisis of affairs. At any rate, Mr. Morton has given a truly English version of it. Mr. Emery played a blunt, rough old soldier (Moustache) well, who is afterwards appointed keeper of a prison—'Because,' he says to his sovereign, 'you think me a savage.' 'No!' (is the answer), 'but because with the courage and rough outside of a lion you have the heart of a man.' The scenes in which Charles Kemble, as Eugene de Biron, is committed to his charge under sentence of death—is liberated by him to perform a last act of friendship and of affection, and returns on his parole of honour to meet his fate (from which however he is delivered by having, in his night's adventure, saved the lives of Henri and Sully, who had been attacked by assassins in a forest hard by) are among the most interesting of the story. We do not enter into the details of the plot, because we hope all our readers will go to see this piece, and it is anticipating a pleasure to come. Besides, we are bad hands at getting up a plot, and should on that account make but indifferent ministers of state. But the whole was delightful. Miss M. Tree was delightful as the village representative of the fair Gabrielle; Mr. Liston was happy as the husband of Jocrisse, 'whom the king had deigned to salute,' and to put a diamond ring on her finger, which was to introduce them to the Louvre in their wooden shoes on his coronation day.—Miss Stephens sung sweetly; Mr. Fawcett was at home in the old general; Irish Johnstone blundered in his own beautiful *brogue*, and every thing was as it should be. We like things to succeed in this manner: that they do not always do so, is assuredly no fault of ours.

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## THE DRAMA: No. VI

*The London Magazine.*

June, 1820

MR. KEAN'S LEAR.—We need not say how much our expectations had been previously excited to see Mr. Kean in this character, and we are sorry to be obliged to add, that they were very considerably disappointed. We had hoped to witness something of the same effect produced upon an audience that Garrick is reported to have done in the part, which made Dr. Johnson resolve never to see him repeat it—the impression was so terrific and overwhelming. If we should make the same rash vow never to see Mr. Kean's Lear again, it would not be from the intensity and excess, but from the deficiency and desultoriness of the interest excited. To give some idea of the manner in which this character might, and ought to be, made to seize upon the feelings of an audience, we have heard it mentioned, that once, when Garrick was in the middle of the mad-scene, his crown of straw came off, which circumstance, though it would have been fatal to a common actor, did not produce the smallest interruption, or even notice in the house. On another occasion, while he was kneeling to repeat the curse, the first row in the pit stood up in order to see him better; the second row, not willing to lose the precious moments by remonstrating, stood up too; and so, by a tacit movement, the entire pit rose to hear the withering imprecation, while the whole passed in such cautious silence, that you might have heard a pin drop. John Kemble (that old campaigner) was also very great in the curse: so we have heard, from very good authorities; and we put implicit faith in them.—What led us to look for the greatest things from Mr. Kean in the present instance, was his own opinion, on which we have a strong reliance. It was always his favourite part. We have understood he has been heard to say, that 'he was very much obliged to the London audiences for the good opinion they had hitherto expressed of him, but that when they came to see him over the dead body of Cordelia, they would have quite a different notion of the matter.' As it happens, they have not yet had an opportunity of seeing him over the dead body of Cordelia: for, after all, our versatile Manager has acted Tate's Lear instead of Shakspear's: and it was suggested, that perhaps Mr. Kean played the whole ill *out of spite*, as he could not have it his own way—a hint to which we lent a willing ear, for we would rather think Mr. Kean the most spiteful man, than not the best actor, in the world! The impression, however, made on our minds was, that, instead of its being his masterpiece, he was to seek in many parts of the character;—that the general conception was often perverse, or feeble; and that there were only two or three

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places where he could be said to electrify the house. It is altogether inferior to his Othello. Yet, if he had even played it equal to that, all we could have said of Mr. Kean would have been that he was a very wonderful man;—and such we certainly think him as it is. Into the bursts, and starts, and torrent of the passion in Othello, this excellent actor appeared to have flung himself completely : there was all the fitful fever of the blood, the jealous madness of the brain : his heart seemed to bleed with anguish, while his tongue dropped broken, imperfect accents of woe ; but there is something (we don't know how) in the gigantic, outspread sorrows of Lear, that seems to elude his grasp, and baffle his attempts at comprehension. The passion in Othello pours along, so to speak, like a river, torments itself in restless eddies, or is hurled from its dizzy height, like a sounding cataract. That in Lear is more like a sea, swelling, chafing, raging, without bound, without hope, without beacon, or anchor. Torn from the hold of his affections and fixed purposes, he floats a mighty wreck in the wide world of sorrows. Othello's causes of complaint are more distinct and pointed, and he has a desperate, a maddening remedy for them in his revenge. But Lear's injuries are without provocation, and admit of no alleviation or atonement. They are strange, bewildering, overwhelming : they wrench asunder, and stun the whole frame : they 'accumulate horrors on horror's head,' and yet leave the mind impotent of resources, cut off, proscribed, anathematised from the common hope of good to itself, or ill to others—amazed at its own situation, but unable to avert it, scarce daring to look at, or to weep over it. The action of the mind, however, under this load of disabling circumstances, is brought out in the play in the most masterly and triumphant manner: it staggers under them, but it does not yield. The character is cemented of human strength and human weaknesses (the firmer for the mixture):—abandoned of fortune, of nature, of reason, and without any energy of purpose, or power of action left,—with the grounds of all hope and comfort failing under it,—but sustained, reared to a majestic height out of the yawning abyss, by the force of the affections, the imagination, and the cords of the human heart—it stands a proud monument, in the gap of nature, over barbarous cruelty and filial ingratitude. We had thought that Mr. Kean would take possession of this time-worn, venerable figure, 'that has outlasted a thousand storms, a thousand winters,' and, like the gods of old, when their oracles were about to speak, shake it with present inspiration :—that he would set up a living copy of it on the stage : but he failed, either from insurmountable difficulties, or from his own sense of the magnitude of the undertaking. There are pieces of ancient granite that turn the edge of any modern chisel : so

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perhaps the genius of no living actor can be expected to cope with Lear. Mr. Kean chipped off a bit of the character here and there : but he did not pierce the solid substance, nor move the entire mass.—Indeed, he did not go the right way about it. He was too violent at first, and too tame afterwards. He sunk from unmixed rage to mere dotage. Thus (to leave this general description, and come to particulars) he made the well-known curse a piece of downright rant. He ‘tore it to tatters, to very rags,’ and made it, from beginning to end, an explosion of ungovernable physical rage, without solemnity, or elevation. Here it is ; and let the reader judge for himself whether it should be so served.

‘Hear, Nature, hear ; dear goddess, hear a father!  
Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend  
To make this creature fruitful :  
Into her womb convey sterility,  
Dry up in her the organs of increase,  
And from her derogate body never spring  
A babe to honour her ! If she must teem,  
Create her child of spleen, that it may live,  
And be a thwart disnatur’d torment to her :  
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth,  
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks ;  
Turn all her mother’s pains and benefits  
To laughter and contempt ; that she may feel,  
How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is  
To have a thankless child.’

Now this should not certainly be spoken in a fit of drunken choler, without any ‘compunctious visitings of nature,’ without any relentings of tenderness, as if it was a mere speech of hate, directed against a person to whom he had the most rooted and unalterable aversion. The very bitterness of the imprecations is prompted by, and runs upon, an allusion to the fondest recollections : it is an excess of indignation, but that indignation, from the depth of its source, conjures up the dearest images of love : it is from these that the brimming cup of anguish overflows ; and the voice, in going over them, should falter, and be choked with other feelings besides anger. The curse in Lear should not be *scolded*, but recited as a Hymn to the Penates ! Lear is not a Timon. From the action and attitude into which Mr. Kean put himself to repeat this passage, we had augured a different result. He threw himself on his knees ; lifted up his arms like withered stumps ; threw his head quite back, and in that position, as if severed from all that held him to society, breathed a heart-struck prayer, like the figure of a man obtruncated !—It was the only moment worthy of himself, and of the character.

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In the former part of the scene, where Lear, in answer to the cool didactic reasoning of Gonerill, asks, 'Are you our daughter?' &c., Mr. Kean, we thought, failed from a contrary defect. The suppression of passion should not amount to immobility: that intensity of feeling of which the slightest intimation is supposed to convey everything, should not seem to convey nothing. There is a difference between ordinary familiarity and the *sublime* of familiarity. The mind may be staggered by a blow too great for it to bear, and may not recover itself for a moment or two; but this state of suspense of its faculties, 'like a phantasma, or a hideous dream,' should not assume the appearance of indifference, or *still-life*. We do not think Mr. Kean kept this distinction (though it is one in which he is often very happy) sufficiently marked in the foregoing question to his daughter, nor in the speech which follows immediately after, as a confirmation of the same sentiment of incredulity and surprise.

'Does any here know me? This is not Lear:  
Does Lear walk thus? speak thus? where are his eyes?  
Either his notion weakens, his discernings  
Are lethargied—Ha! waking—'tis not so;  
Who is it that can tell me who I am?  
Lear's shadow? I would learn; for by the marks  
Of sovereignty, of knowledge, and of reason,  
I should be false persuaded I had daughters.  
Your name, fair gentlewoman?'

These fearful interrogatories, which stand ready to start away on the brink of madness, should not certainly be asked like a common question, nor a dry sarcasm. If Mr. Kean did not speak them so, we beg his pardon.—In what comes after this, in the apostrophe to Ingratitude, in the sudden call for his horses, in the defence of the character of his train as 'men of choice and rarest parts,' and in the recurrence to Cordelia's 'most small fault,' there are plenty of stops to play upon, all the varieties of agony, of anger and impatience, of asserted dignity and tender regret—Mr. Kean struck but two notes all through, the highest and the lowest.

This scene of Lear with Gonerill, in the first act, is only to be paralleled by the doubly terrific one between him and Regan and Gonerill in the second act. To call it a decided failure would be saying what we do not think: to call it a splendid success would be saying so no less. Mr. Kean did not appear to us to set his back fairly to his task, or to trust implicitly to his author, but to be trying experiments upon the audience, and waiting to see the result. We never saw this daring actor want confidence before, but he seemed to cower and hesitate before the public eye in the present instance, and

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to be looking out for the effect of what he did, while he was doing it. In the ironical remonstrance to Regan, for example :

‘ Dear daughter, I confess that I am old—  
Age is unnecessary, &c.’

he might be said to be waiting for the report of the House to know how low he should bend his knee in mimic reverence, how far he should sink his voice into the tones of feebleness, despondency, and mendicancy. But, if ever, it was upon *this* occasion that he ought to have raised himself above criticism, and sat enthroned (in the towering contemplations of his own mind) with Genius and Nature. They alone (and not the critic’s eye, nor the tumultuous voices of the pit) are the true judges of Lear! If he had trusted only to these, his own counsellors and bosom friends, we see no limit to the effect he might have produced. But he did not give any particular effect to the exclamation—

——‘ Beloved Regan,  
Thy sister’s naught : oh, Regan, she hath tied  
Sharp-tooth’d unkindness, like a vulture here : ’

nor to the assurance that he will not return to her again—

‘ Never, Regan :  
She hath abated me of half my train,  
Look’d black upon me ; struck me with her tongue,  
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart.  
All the stored vengeance of heaven fall  
On her ingrateful top ! ’

nor to the description of his two daughters’ looks—

——‘ Her eyes are fierce ; but thine  
Do comfort, and not burn : ’

nor to that last sublime appeal to the heavens on seeing Gonerill approach—

‘ Oh, heav’ns !  
If you do love old men, if your sweet sway  
Hallow obedience, if yourselves are old,  
Make it your cause, send down, and take my part.  
Art not asham’d to look upon this beard ?  
Oh, Regan, will you take her by the hand ? ’

One would think there are tones, and looks, and gestures, answerable to these words, to thrill and harrow up the thoughts, to ‘ appal the guilty, and make mad the free,’ or that might ‘ create a soul under the ribs of death ! ’ But we did not see, or hear them. It was Mr.

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Kean's business to furnish them : it would have been ours to feel them, if he had ! It is not enough that Lear's crosses and perplexities are expressed by single strokes. There should be an agglomeration of horrors, closing him in like a phalanx. His speech should be thick with the fulness of his agony. His face should, as it were, encrust and stiffen into amazement at his multiplied afflictions. A single image of ruin is nothing—there should be a growing desolation all around him. His wrongs should seem enlarged tenfold through the solid atmosphere of his despair—his thoughts should be vast and lucid, like the sun when he declines—He should be ' a huge dumb heap ' of woe ! The most that Mr. Kean did was to make some single hits here and there ; but these did not tell, because they were separated from the main body and movement of the passion. They might be compared to interlineations of the character, rather than parts of the text. In the sudden reiteration of the epithet—'*fiery* quality of the Duke,' applied to Cornwall by Gloster, at which his jealousy blazes out to extravagance, we thought Mr. Kean feeble and indecisive : but in breaking away at the conclusion of the scene, ' I will do such things : what they are, yet I know not ; but they shall be the terrors of the earth,'—he made one of those tremendous bursts of energy and grandeur, which shed a redeeming glory round every character he plays.

Mr. Kean's performance of the remainder of the character, when the king's intellects begin to fail him, and are, at last, quite disordered, was curious and quaint, rather than impressive or natural. There appeared a degree of perversity in all this—a determination to give the passages in a way in which nobody else would give them, and in which nobody else would expect them to be given. But singularity is not always excellence. Why, for instance, should our actor lower his voice in the soliloquy in the third act, ' Blow winds, and crack your cheeks,' &c. in which the tumult of Lear's thoughts, and the extravagance of his expressions, seem almost contending with the violence of the storm ? We can conceive no reason but that it was contrary to the practice of most actors hitherto. Mr. Rae's manner of mouthing the passage would have been ' more germane to the matter.' In asking his companion—

' How dost, my boy ? Art cold ?  
I'm cold myself '—

there was a shrinking of the frame, and a chill glance of the eye, like the shivering of an ague-fit : but no other feeling surmounted the physical expression. On meeting with Edgar, as Mad Tom, Lear wildly exclaims, with infinite beauty and pathos, ' Didst thou give all

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to thy daughters, and art thou come to this?' And again, presently after, he repeats, 'What, have his daughters brought him to this pass? Couldst thou save nothing? Didst thou give 'em all?'—questions which imply a strong possession, the eager indulgence of a favourite idea which has just struck his heated fancy; but which Mr. Kean pronounced in a feeble, sceptical, querulous under-tone, as if wanting information as to some ordinary occasion of insignificant distress. We do not admire these cross-readings of a work like *Lear*. They may be very well when the actor's ingenuity, however paradoxical, is more amusing than the author's sense: but it is not so in this case. From some such miscalculation, or desire of finding out a clue to the character, other than 'was set down' for him, Mr. Kean did not display his usual resources and felicitous spirit in these terrific scenes:—he drivelled, and looked vacant, and moved his lips, so as not to be heard, and did nothing, and appeared, at times, as if he would quite forget himself. The pauses were too long; the indications of remote meaning were too significant to be well understood. The spectator was big with expectation of seeing some extraordinary means employed: but the general result did not correspond to the waste of preparation. In a subsequent part, Mr. Kean did not give to the reply of *Lear*, 'Aye, every inch a king!'—the same vehemence and emphasis that Mr. Booth did; and in this he was justified: for, in the text, it is an exclamation of indignant irony, not of conscious superiority; and he immediately adds with deep disdain, to prove the nothingness of his pretensions—

'When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.'

Almost the only passage in which Mr. Kean obtained his usual heart-felt tribute, was in his interview with *Cordelia*, after he awakes from sleep, and has been restored to his senses.

'Pray, do not mock me:  
I am a very foolish fond old man,  
Fourscore and upward; and to deal plainly,  
I fear, I am not in my perfect mind.  
Methinks, I should know you, and know this man;  
Yet I am doubtful; for I'm mainly ignorant  
What place this is; and all the skill I have  
Remembers not these garments; nay, I know not  
Where I did lodge last night. *Do not laugh at me,*  
*For, as I am a man, I think this lady*  
*To be my child Cordelia.*  
*Cordelia.* And so I am; I am.'

In uttering the last words, Mr. Kean staggered faintly into *Cordelia's*

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arms, and his sobs of tenderness, and his ecstasy of joy commingled, drew streaming tears from the brightest eyes,

‘ Which sacred pity had engender’d there.’

Mr. Rae was very effective in the part of Edgar, and was received with very great applause. If this gentleman could rein in a certain ‘ false gallop ’ in his voice and gait, he would be a most respectable addition, from the spirit and impressiveness of his declamation, to the general strength of any theatre, and we heartily congratulate him on his return to Drury-lane.—Mrs. West made an interesting representative of Cordelia. In all parts of plaintive tenderness, she is an excellent actress. We could have spared the love-scenes—and one of her lovers, Mr. Hamblin. Mr. Holland was great in Gloster. In short, what is he not great in, that requires a great deal of sturdy prosing, an ‘ honest, sonsy, bawson’t face,’ and a lamentably broken-down, hale, wholesome, hearty voice, that seems ‘ incapable of its own distress ’? We like his jovial, well-meaning way of going about his parts. We can afford, out of his good cheer, and lively aspect, and his manner of bestriding the stage, to be made melancholy by him at any time, without being a bit the worse for it. Mr. Downton’s Kent was not at all good : it was a downright discarded serving-man. Mr. Russell, in the absence of the Fool, played the zany in the Steward. The tragedy was, in general, got up better than we expected.

ARTAXERXES.—We believe that this is the most beautiful opera in the world, though we have great authorities against us : but we do not believe, that it is better acted now than it ever was, though we have no less an authority for us, were we disposed to be of that opinion, than the Manager himself. The *Cognoscenti*, he tells us, hold that this Musical Drama was never so got up before as it is at present ; viz., by Mr. Braham, Mr. Incledon, Miss Carew, and the pretty little Madame Vestris. There is no degree of excellence, however high, with which this Opera could be played, that we should not hail with delight ; and we would at any time go ten miles on foot, only to see it played as we formerly did. The time we allude to, was when Miss Stephens first came out in Mandane, when Miss Rennell (who is since dead) played Artaxerxes, when Mr. Incledon played the same part he does still, better than he does at present, when Miss Carew was the fair Semira, who listens no less delightfully than she sings, and some one (we forget who) played Arbaces, not very well. As to Mr. Braham, he was not there, nor was he wanted ;—for we prefer the music of Arne, to Mr. Braham’s, and Mr. Braham willingly gives us none but his own. He has omitted some of the most

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exquisite airs in Artaxerxes to introduce others of his own composing;—and where he has not done this, he might as well, for he so overloads, embellishes, accompanies, and flourishes over the original songs that one would hardly know them again. Can anything be more tantalising than to hear him sing ‘Water parted from the sea?’ Instead of one continued stream of plaintive sound, labouring from the heart with fond emotion, and still murmuring as it flows, it was one incessant exhibition of frothy affectation and sparkling pretence; as if the only ambition of the singer, and the only advantage he could derive from the power and flexibility of his voice, was to run away at every opportunity from the music and the sentiment. Does Mr. Braham suppose that the finest pieces of composition were only invented, and modulated into their faultless perfection, for him to play tricks with, to make *ad libitum* experiments of his powers of execution upon them, and to use the *score* of the musician only as the rope-dancer does his rope, to vault up and down on,—to shew off his *pirouettes* and his summersaults, and to perform feats of impossibility? This celebrated person’s favourite style of singing is like bad Operadancing, of which not grace, but trick is the constant character. So Mr. Braham’s object is not to please but astonish his hearers—to do what is difficult and absurd, not what is worth doing—to unfold the richness, depth, sweetness, and variety of his tones, not to touch the chords of sentiment. In fact, it is the essence of all perverted art, to display art, and carry itself to the opposite extreme from nature, lest it should be mistaken for her, instead of returning back to and identifying itself as much as possible with nature (both as means and end) that they may seem inseparable, and no one discern the difference. The accomplished singer, whom we are criticising, too often puts himself in the place of his subject. He mistakes the object of the public. We do not go to the theatre to admire him, to hear him *tune* his voice like an instrument for sale. We go to be delighted with certain ‘concord of sweet sounds,’ which strike certain springs in unison in the human breast. These things are found united in nature, and in the works of the greatest masters, such as Arne and Mozart. What they have joined together, why will Mr. Braham put asunder? Why will he pour forth, for instance, as in this very song which he murdered, a volume of sound in one note, like the deep thunder, or the loud water-fall, and in the next, without any change of circumstance, try to thrill the ear by an excess of the softest and most voluptuous effeminacy? There is no reason why he should—but that he *can*, and is allowed to do so. Mr. Braham, we know, complains that the fault is not in his own taste, but in the vitiated ear of the town which he is obliged (much against his will)

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to pamper with trills, quavers, crotchets, *falsettos*, *bravuras*, and all the idle brood of affectation and sickly sensibility. He might have been taught a lesson to the contrary, a year or two ago, when he sung with Miss Stephens at Covent-Garden; and never surely was the difference of two styles more marked, or the triumph of good taste over bad more complete. Mr. Braham could not plead want of skill, of power, of practice: it was the difference of style only; and Miss Stephens's simple, artless manner, gave nothing but pure pleasure, while Mr. Braham's ornamental, laboured, complicated, or tortured execution, excited feelings of mingled astonishment, regret, and disappointment. There is Miss Tree again, who is another instance. What is it that gives such a superiority to her singing? Nothing but its truth, its seriousness, its sincerity. She has no capriciousness, plays no fantastic tricks; but seems as much in the power, at the mercy of the composer, as a musical instrument: her lips transmit the notes she has by heart, as the Æolian harp is stirred by the murmuring wind; and her voice seems to brood over, and become enamoured of the sentiment. But simplicity, we believe, will not do alone without sentiment, and we suspect Mr. Braham of a want of sentiment. He apparently sings, as far as the passion is concerned, from the marginal directions, *con furio*, *con strepito*, *adagio*, &c., which are but indifferent helps to expression; and where a performer cannot fasten instinctively on the sympathy of his hearers, he has no better resource than to make an appeal to their wonder. To confess the extent of our insensibility, or our prejudice, we do not admire Mr. Braham's 'Mild as the moonbeams,' which is in his most lisping and languishing, nor his 'Wallace,' which is in his most heroic manner. What we like best, is his Oratorio style of singing, and that is the most manly, the most direct, and the least an abuse of the great powers which both Nature and Art have given to him. Having said so much of Mr. Braham, we will say nothing of Mr. Incledon. Miss Carew, as Mandane, warbled like a nightingale, and held her head on one side like a peacock; of Madame Vestris, we repeat that she is pretty. Indeed, we liked her the best of the four.

### MR. MACREADY'S MACBETH

*The Examiner.*

June 25, 1820

MR. MACREADY'S *Macbeth*, which he had for his benefit, and which he has played once or twice since, is a judicious and spirited performance. But we are not in the number of those who think it his finest character. Sensibility, not imagination, is his *forte*. Natural expression,

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human feeling, seems to woo him like a bride; but the *ideal* and preternatural beckon him only at a distance and mock his embraces. He sees no dim, portentous visions in his mind's eye; his acting has no shadowy landscape back-ground to surround it; he is not waited on by spirits of the deep or of the air; neither fate nor metaphysical aid are in league with him; he is prompter to himself, and treads within the circle of the human heart. The machinery in Macbeth is so far lost upon him: there is no secret correspondence between him and the Weird Sisters. The poet has put a fruitless sceptre in his hand,—a curtain is between him and the 'air-drawn dagger with its gout of blood'; he does not cower under the traditions of the age, or startle at 'thick-coming fancies.' He is more like a man debating the reality, or questioning the power of the grotesque and unimaginable forms that hover round him, than one hurried away by his credulous hopes, or shrinking from intolerable fears. There is not a weight of superstitious terror loading the atmosphere and hanging over the stage when Mr. Macready plays the part. He has cast the cumbrous slough of Gothic tragedy, and comes out a mere modern, agitated by common means and intelligible motives. The preternatural agency is no more than an accompaniment, the pretended occasion, not the indispensable and all-powerful cause. It appears to us then, that this excellent and able actor, *struck short* of the higher and imaginative part of the character, and consequently was deficient in the human passion, which is the mighty appendage to it. We thought Mr. Macready in a manner conscious of this want of entire possession of the character. He was looking out for new readings, transposing attitudes and stage effects, trying substitutes and experiments, studying passages instead of reciting them, rehearsing Macbeth, not *being* it. His performance of it was critical and fastidious: you would say that he was considering how he should act the part, so as to avoid certain errors or produce certain effects—not that he ever flung himself into the subject, and swam to shore, safe from carping objection, and above the reach of all praise. Mr. Macready does not often imitate other actors, but he endeavours not to imitate them, and that's almost as bad. He should think of nothing but his part, and rely on nothing but his own powers. Singularity is not excellence. If to follow in the track of others shews a servile genius and pitiful ambition, neither is it right to go out of the strait road merely because others travel in it—'but still to follow nature is the rule.'—John Kemble was the best Macbeth (upon the whole) that we have seen. There was a stiff, horror-stricken stateliness in his person and manner, like a man bearing up against supernal influences; and a bewildered distraction, a perplexity and at the same time a rigidity of purpose, like one who

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had been stunned by a blow from fate. Mr. Kean is great only in one scene, that after the murder of Duncan; his acting also consists only in the direct embodying of human passion, and is entirely 'docked and curtailed' of the sweeping train of poetical imagination. On the evening we saw Mr. Macready's Macbeth Mrs. Faucit played Lady Macbeth, and acted up to that arduous part with great spirit and self-possession; and Mr. Terry was the representative of Macduff. The only fault of this gentleman's acting is its slowness. The words fall from his lips, like pendent drops from icicles. A speech, as he gives it, is equal to 'two lang Scotch miles.' This not only causes a stagnation and heaviness in the sentiments, but often cuts the sense in two. Thus in the exclamation which Macduff utters on hearing of the slaughter of his children, 'Oh Hell-Kite, all?' Mr. Terry paused at the hyphen, as if to take time to think, and by this means made it like an apostrophe to 'Hell,' adding the other syllable of the word, which determined the meaning and direction of his thoughts, afterwards. Mr. Egerton as usual played Banquo, and makes as solid a Ghost as we would wish to encounter of a winter's eve.

David Rizzio we have not been able to get a peep at: but a friend whispered us that it was poor, and we see it is praised in the *New Times*!

On Friday Miss Stephens had a bumper for her benefit. The entertainments were the Lord of the Manor, a Concert, and the Libertine. In the first, Mr. Duruset from indisposition, and after making one feeble effort, omitted the songs, by the indulgence of the audience; after that, we do not see why he should be required to go through the rest of the part, for he has not 'a speaking face.' Jones's Mr. Contrast is a striking, fulsome fop. But he makes foppery not only an object of laughter, but of disgust; and perhaps this is going beyond the mark intended. We would recommend to our readers to go and see Mr. Liston's Moll Flagon by all means. It is irresistible. We may say of it with the poet—

'Let those laugh now who never laugh'd before,  
And those who still have laugh'd now laugh the more.'

Mrs. Salmon's singing in the Concert was 'd'une pathetique à faire fendre les rochers,'—and Miss Stephens's Echo song seemed sung by a Spirit or an enchantress. We were glad to hear it, for we have an attachment to Miss Stephens on account of 'auld lang syne' (we like old friendships better than new), and do not wish that little murmuring syren Miss Tree to wean us from our old and artless favourite. —Those were happy days when first Miss Stephens began to sing! When she came out in Mandane, in Polly, and in Rosetta in Love in

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a Village ! She came upon us by surprise, but it was to delight and charm us. There was a new sound in the air, like the voice of Spring ; it was as if Music had become young again, and was resolved to try the power of her softest, simplest, sweetest notes. Love and Hope listened, as her clear, liquid throat poured its delicious warblings on the ear, and at the close of every strain, still called on Echo to prolong the sound. They were the sweetest notes we ever heard, and almost the last we ever heard with pleasure ! For since then, other events not to be named lightly here, but ‘ thoughts of which can never from the heart ’—‘ with other notes than to the Orphean lyre,’ have stopped our ears to the voice of the charmer. But since the voice of Liberty has risen once more in Spain, its grave and its birth place, and like a babbling hound has wakened the echos in Galicia, in the Asturias, in Castile and Leon, and Estremadura, why, we feel as if we ‘ had three ears again ’ and the heart to use them, and as if we could once more write with the same feelings (the tightness removed from the breast, and the pains smoothed from the brow) as we did when we gave the account of Miss Stephens’s first appearance in the Beggar’s Opera. Life might then indeed ‘ know the return of spring,’—and end, as it began, with faith in human kind !—

### THE DRAMA : No. VII

*The London Magazine.*

*July, 1820.*

THE Drama is a subject of which we could give a very entertaining account once a month, if there were no plays acted all the year. But, as some artists have said of Nature, ‘ the Theatres put us out.’ The only article we have written on this matter that has given us entire satisfaction—(we answer, be it observed, for nobody but ourselves)—is the one we wrote in the winter, when, in consequence of two great public calamities, the theatres were closed for some weeks together. We seized that lucky opportunity, to take a peep into the raree-show of our own fancies,—the moods of our own minds,—and a very pretty little kaleidoscope it made. Our readers, we are sure, remember the description. Our head is stuffed full of recollections on the subject of the Drama, some of older, some of later date, but all treasured up with more or less fondness ; we, in short, love it, and what we love, we can talk of for ever. We love it as well as Mr. Weathercock loves maccaroni ; as Mr. Croker loves the Quarterly Review, and the Quarterly Review the Edinburgh ; as Kings love Queens ; and Scotchmen love their country. But, as happens in some of these instances, we love it best at a distance.

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We like to be a hundred miles off from the Acted Drama in London, and to get a friend (who may be depended on) to give an account of it for us; which we read, at our leisure, under the shade of a clump of lime-trees. What is the use indeed of coming to town, merely to discover that Mr. Elliston is 'fat, fair, and forty,' and becomes silk hose worse than fleecy hosiery?

'Odious, in *satín*! 'Twould a saint provoke!'

We had rather stay where we are, and think how young, how genteel, how sprightly Lewis was at seventy! Garrick too was fat and puffy; but who ever perceived it through that airy soul of his, that life of mind, that bore him up 'like little wanton boys that swim on bladders'? Or why should we take coach to prevent our friend and coadjutor, of the whimsical name,—that Bucolical Juvenile, the Sir Piercie Shafton of the London Magazine,—from carrying off his Mysie Happer, the bewitching Miss Brunton, from our critical advances, and forestalling our praises of the grey twinkling eyes, the large white teeth, and querulous catechising voice of this accomplished little rustic? We shall leave him in full possession of his prize;—she shall be his *Protection*, and he shall be her *Audacity*: but we cannot consent to give up to his agreeable importunity our right and interest in the Miss Dennetts—the fair, the 'inexpressive three.' We will not erase their names from our pages, but twine them in cypher, as they are 'written in our heart's tables,'—though they do not dance at the Opera! We have not this gentleman's exquisitely happy knack in the geography of criticism: nor do we carry a map of London in our pockets to make out an exact scale of merit and *virtu*; nor judge of black eyes, a white cheek, and so forth, by the bills of mortality. We do not hate pathos because it is found in the Borough; our taste (such as it is) can cross the water, by any of the four bridges, in search of spirit and nature; we can make up our minds to beauty even at Whitechapel! Our friend and correspondent, Janus, grieves and wonders at this. He asks us why we do not express his sentiments instead of our own? and we answer, 'It is because we are not you.' He runs away from vulgar places and people, as from the plague; swoons at the mention of the Royal Cobourg; mimics his barber's pronunciation of *Ashley's*; and is afraid to trust himself at Sadler's Wells, lest his clothes should be covered with gingerbread, and spoiled with the smell of gin and tobacco. Now we, in our turn, laugh at all this. We are never afraid of being confounded with the vulgar; nor is our time taken up in thinking of what is ungenteel, and persuading ourselves that we are mightily superior to it. The gentlemen in the gallery, in Fielding's

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time, thought every thing *low*; and our friend, Mr. Weathercock, presents his compliments to us, and tells us we are wrong in condescending to any thing beneath 'Milanie's foot of fire.' We have no notion of condescending in any thing we write about: we seek for truth and beauty wherever we can find them, and think that with these we are safe from contamination. 'Entire affection scorneth nicer hands.' Our comparative negligence, in this respect, probably arises from the difference that exists between our dress and that of our correspondent. A good judge has said, 'a man's mind is parcel of his fortunes,'—and a man's taste is part of his dress. If we wore 'diamond rings on our fingers, antique cameos in our breast-pins, cambric pocket-handkerchiefs breathing forth Attargul, and pale lemon-coloured kid gloves,' our perceptions might be strangely altered. We might then think Mr. Young 'the perfect gentleman both on and off the stage,' and consider Mr. Jones's 'cut-steel watch chain quite refreshing.' As it is, we differ from him on most of the above points. Yet, for any thing we see to the contrary, we might safely have staid in the country another month, and deputed the modern Euphuist, as our tire-man of the theatre, to adjust Mr. Kemble's boots, to tie on Mr. Abbott's sash to his liking, to dry Miss Stephens's bonnet, and dye Miss Tree's stockings any colour but blue:—but we heard from good authority that there was a new tragedy worth seeing, and also that it was written by an old friend of ours. *That* there was no resisting. So 'we came, saw, and were satisfied.'—*Virginius* is a good play:—we repeat it. It is a real tragedy; a sound historical painting. Mr. Knowles has taken the facts as he found them, and expressed the feelings that would naturally arise out of the occasion. Strange to say, in this age of poetical egotism, the author, in writing his play, has been thinking of *Virginius* and his daughter, more than of himself! This is the true imagination, to put yourself in the place of others, and to feel and speak for them. Our unpretending poet travels along the high road of nature and the human heart; and does not turn aside to pluck pastoral flowers in primrose lanes, or hunt gilded butterflies over enamelled meads, breathless and exhausted;—nor does he, with vain ambition, 'strike his lofty head against the stars.' So far indeed, he may thank the Gods for not having made him poetical. Some cold, formal, affected, and interested critics have not known what to make of this. It was not what *they* would have done. One finds fault with the style as poor, because it is not inflated. Another can see nothing in it, because it is not interlarded with modern metaphysical theories, unknown to the ancients. A third declares that it is all borrowed from Shakespeare, because it is true to nature. A fourth pronounces

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it a superior kind of melodrame, because it pleases the public. The two last things to which the dull and envious ever think of attributing the success of any work (and yet the only ones to which genuine success is attributable), are Genius and Nature. The one they hate, and of the other they are ignorant. The same critics who despise and slur the *Virginius* of Covent Garden, praise the *Virginius* and the *David Rizzio* of Drury Lane, because (as it should appear) there is nothing in *them* to rouse their dormant spleen, stung equally by merit or success, and to mortify their own ridiculous, inordinate, and hopeless vanity. Their praise is of a piece with their censure; and equally from what they applaud and what they condemn, you perceive the principle of their perverse judgments. They are soothed with flatness and failure, and doat over them with parental fondness; but what is above their strength, and demands their admiration, they shrink from with loathing, and an oppressive sense of their own imbecility: and what they dare not openly condemn, they would willingly secrete from the public ear! We have described this class of critics more than once, but they breed still: all that we can do is to sweep them from our path as often as we meet with them, and to remove their dirt and cobwebs as fast as they proceed from the same noisome source. Besides the merits of *Virginius* as a literary composition, it is admirably adapted to the stage. It presents a succession of pictures. We might suppose each scene almost to be copied from a beautiful bas-relief, or to have formed a group on some antique vase. 'Tis the taste of the ancients, 'tis classical lore.' But it is a speaking and a living picture we are called upon to witness. These figures so strikingly, so simply, so harmoniously combined, start into life and action, and breathe forth words, the soul of passion—inflamed with anger, or melting with tenderness. Several passages of great beauty were cited in a former article on this subject; but we might mention in addition, the fine imaginative apostrophe of *Virginius* to his daughter, when the story of her birth is questioned:

' I never saw you look so like your mother  
In all my life '—

the exquisite lines ending,

. . . ' The lie  
Is most unfruitful then, that makes the flower—  
The very flow'r our bed connubial grew  
To prove its barrenness '—

or the sudden and impatient answer of *Virginius* to *Numitorius*, who asks if the slave will swear *Virginia* is her child—

' To be sure she will ! Is she not his slave ? '

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or again, the dignified reply to his brother, who reminds him it is time to hasten to the Forum,

‘ Let the Forum wait for us ! ’

This is the true language of nature and passion ; and all that we can wish for, or require, in dramatic writing. If such language is not poetical, it is the fault of poets, who do not write as the heart dictates ! We have seen plays that produced much more tumultuous applause ; none scarcely that excited more sincere sympathy. There were no clap-traps, no sentiments that were the understood signals for making a violent uproar ; but we heard every one near us express heartfelt and unqualified approbation ; and tears more precious supplied the place of loud huzzas. Each spectator appeared to appeal to, and to judge from the feelings of his own breast, not from vulgar clamour ; and we trust the success will be more lasting and secure, as its foundations are laid in the deep and proud humility of nature. Mr. Knowles owes every thing, that an author can owe, to the actors ; and they owed every thing to their attention to truth and to real feeling. Mr. Macready’s *Virginus* is his best and most faultless performance,—at once the least laboured and the most effectual. His fine, manly voice sends forth soothing, impassioned tones, that seem to linger round, or burst with terrific grandeur from the home of his heart. Mr. Kemble’s *Scipio* was heroic, spirited, fervid, the Roman warrior and lover ; and Miss Foote was ‘ the freeborn Roman maid,’ with a little bit, a delightful little bit, of the English school-girl in her acting. We incline to the *ideal* of our own country-women after all, when they are so young, so innocent, so handsome. We are both pleased and sorry to hear a report which threatens us with the loss of so great a favourite ; and one chief source of our regret will be, that she will no longer play *Virginus*. The scenery allotted to this tragedy encumbered the stage, and the simplicity of the play. Temples and pictured monuments adorned the scene, which were not in existence till five hundred years after the date of the story ; and the ruins of the Capitol, of Constantine’s arch, and the temple of Jupiter Stator, frowned at once on the death of *Virginus*, and the decline and fall of the Roman empire. As to the dresses, we leave them to our deputy of the wardrobe ; but, we believe, they were got right at last, with some trouble. In the printed play, we observe a number of passages marked with inverted commas, which are omitted in the representation. This is the case almost uniformly wherever the words ‘ Tyranny,’ or ‘ Liberty,’ occur. Is this done by authority, or is it prudence in the author, ‘ *lest the courtiers offended should be* ’ ? Is the name of Liberty to be struck out of the English language, and

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are we not to hate tyrants even in an old Roman play? 'Let the galled jade wince : our withers are unwrung.' We turn to a pleasanter topic, and are glad to find an old and early friend unaltered in sentiment as he is unspoiled by success :—the same boy-poet, after a lapse of years, as when we first knew him ; unconscious of the wreath he has woven round his brow, laughing and talking of his play just as if it had been written by any body else, and as simple-hearted, downright, and honest as the unblemished work he has produced !<sup>1</sup>

We saw Mr. Kean at his benefit at the risk of our limbs, and are sorry for the accident that happened to himself in the course of the evening. We have longed ever since we saw Mr. Kean—that is, any time these six years—to see him jump through a trap-door—hearing he could do it. 'Why are those things hid? Is this a time to conceal virtues?' said we to ourselves. What was our disappointment, then, when on the point of this consummation of our wishes—just in the moment of the projection of our hopes—when dancing with Miss Valancy too, he broke the tendon Achilles, and down fell all our promised pleasure, our castles in the air! Good reader, it was not the jump through the trap-door that we wished literally to see; but the leap from Othello to Harlequin. What a jump! What an interval, what a gulph to pass! What an elasticity of soul and body too—what a diversity of capacity in the same diminutive person! To be Othello, a man should be all passion, abstraction, imagination: to be Harlequin, he should have his wits in his heels, and in his fingers' ends! To be both, is impossible, or miraculous. Each doubles the wonder of the other; and in judging of the aggregate amount of merit, we must proceed, not by the rules of addition, but multiply Harlequin's lightness into Othello's gravity, and the result will give us the sum total of Mr. Kean's abilities. What a spring, what an expansive force of mind, what an untamed vigour, to rise to such a height from such a lowness; to tower like a Phoenix from its ashes; to ascend like a pyramid of fire! Why, what a complex piece of machinery is here; what an involution of faculties, circle within circle, that enables the same individual to make a summersault, and that swells the veins of his forehead with true artificial passion, and that turns him to a marble statue with thought! It is not being educated in the fourth form of St. Paul's school, or cast in the antique mould of the high Roman fashion, that can do this; but it is genius alone that can raise a man thus above his first origin, and make him thus various from himself!

<sup>1</sup> Generosity and simplicity are not the characteristic virtues of poets. It has been disputed whether 'an honest man is the noblest work of God.' But we think an honest poet is so.

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It is bestriding the microcosm of man like a Colossus, and, by uniting the extremes of the chain of being, seemingly implies all the intermediate links. We do not think much of Mr. Kean's singing : we could, with a little practice and tuition, sing nearly as well ourselves : as for his dancing, it is but *so so*, and anybody can dance : his fencing is good, nervous, firm, fibrous, like that of a new pocket Hercules :—but for his jumping through a hole in the wall,—clean through, head over heels, like a shot out of culverin—‘by Heavens, it would have been great!’ This we fully expected at his hands, and ‘in this expectation we were baulked.’ Just as our critical expectations were on tip-toe, Mr. Kean suddenly strained his ankle :—as it were to spite us ;—we went out in dudgeon, and were near missing his Imitations, which would not have signified much if we had. They were tolerable, indifferent, pretty good, but not the thing. Mr. Matthews's or Mr. Yates's are better. They were softened down, and fastidious. Kemble was not very like. Incledon and Braham were the best, and Munden was very middling. The after-piece of the Admirable Crichton, in which he was to do all this, was neither historical nor dramatic. The character, which might have given excellent opportunities for the display of a variety of extraordinary accomplishments in the real progress of the story, was ill-conceived and ill-managed. He was made either a pedagogue or an antic. In himself, he was dull and grave, instead of being high-spirited, volatile, and self-sufficient ; and to show off his abilities, he was put into masquerade. We did not like it at all ; though, from the prologue, we had expected more point and daring. Mr. Kean's Jaffier was fine, and in some parts admirable. This indeed, is only to say that he played it. But it was not one of his finest parts, nor indeed one in which we expected him to shine pre-eminently : but on that we had not depended, for we never know beforehand what he will do best or worst. He is one of those wandering fires, whose orbit is not calculable by any known rules of criticism. Mr. Elliston's *Pierre* was, we are happy to say, a spirited and effectual performance. We must not forget to add that Mrs. M'Gibbon's *Belvidera* was excellent, declaimed with impassioned propriety, and acted with dignity and grace.

‘And what of this new opera of David Rizzio, that the *New Times* makes such a rout about?’—Nothing. ‘Nothing can come of nothing.’ We truly and strictly could not make a word of sense of it. We wonder whose it can be. It is praised too in the *Chronicle* ; but that is no matter. The story promised much ; the music, the old Scotch tunes, more. They were both completely *transmogrified*,—they melted into thin air. The author set aside the

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one, and the composers (of whom there are no less than five) the other. This required some ingenuity. The plot turns altogether upon this, that Rizzio (Braham) is supposed and made to be in love with Lady Mary Livingstone (Miss Carew), and by warbling out her Christian name in ballads in the open air, is imagined, by Darnley and the rest, to be in love with Mary, Queen of Scots (Mrs. West), from which strange misinterpretation all the mischief and confusion ensue. We fancy there is no foundation for this in tradition or old records. The author has indeed reversed the method of the writer of the Scotch Novels, for, instead of building as much as possible on facts and history, he has built as little as possible on them—and has produced just the contrary effect of the Great Unknown, that is, has spun a tissue of incidents and sentiments out of his own head, worth nothing, unmeaning, feeble, languid, disjointed, and for the most part, incomprehensible. Most of the scenes in the two first acts consisted of the Exits and Entrances of single persons, who only appeared to deliver an introductory speech, and sing a song, and then vanished before any one else could come on to entrap them into a dialogue—a delicate evasion of the wily dramatist! Mr. Barnard repeated these Operatic soliloquies so often, as to be almost hissed off the stage, and Miss Povey (his sweetheart), by coming to his relief half a minute after he was gone, did not much mend the matter, either by the charms of her voice or person. This young lady is pretty, and sings agreeably enough, but we do not see what she can have to do with romantic sentiments or situations. Some of those in which she was placed, would require the utmost delicacy of the most accomplished heroine to carry them off without an obtrusive sense of impropriety. For instance, after warbling a ditty to the desert air of Holyrood House, she retires into a summer-house hard by, to keep an assignation with the persuasive Mr. Barnard, and is presently surprised and carried off, instead of the silver-voiced Carew, by a band of ruffians, who—on her making many exclamations, and repeating ‘Oh! dear me!’ and saying she only came to meet a young man—reply very laconically, ‘Aye, you came to meet one young man, and now you have met with four—that’s better!’ In the last scene, the catastrophe is brought about by Rizzio’s being discovered by the conspirators at a magnificent entertainment in the apartment of the Queen, which confirms their former suspicions and infuriates their revenge; and he is hurried from her frantic embraces, which display all the tenderness of a mistress, rather than the attachment of a sovereign, to be despatched in the adjoining chamber. His assassins find their error too late, when, from the passionate declaration of Lady Mary Livingstone that she is his wife, they are

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convinced of his and the Queen's innocence. The lesson to be drawn from this fiction, seems to be, that ladies (whether Princesses or not) who defy opinion, must take the consequences of their infatuated self-indulgence, or involve others in ruin: for the presumption is, that no woman in her senses will risk her character, unless she has a further object in view, namely, to gratify her passions. This was not, however, the inference drawn by the generality of the audience; for several passages, construed in allusion to passing events, were loudly and triumphantly cheered. They, indeed, saved the piece from final and absolute damnation, for it drooped from the beginning, and to the end, and had no other interest than what arose from the occasional parallelism of political situations. Mr. Braham (as David Rizzio) disappointed us much. He sung the airs he had probably himself selected, without any affectation indeed—'softly sweet in Lydian measures'—but without any effect whatever upon our ears; he fell into simplicity and insipidity, plump together, ten thousand fathoms down. The other singers acquitted themselves very well, but there was nothing to excite an interest in itself, or to answer the previous expectations arising from the title of the piece. We had hoped to have been treated to some old Scotch airs, at least: but the joint-composers seemed to have a strong aversion to any thing connected with the sound of a bagpipe. This we suppose is a symptom of the progress of a more refined taste among us. The causes of our want of sympathy with it have been explained above. The piece has been repeated once or twice since.

Giovanni in London has been transferred to this theatre (Drury Lane) from the Olympic. It was a favourite with the town there; it has become a favourite with the town here. There is something in burlesque that pleases. We like to see the great degraded to a level with the little. The humour is extravagant and coarse, but it is certainly droll; and we never check our inclinations to laugh, when we have an opportunity given us. We have not laughed so heartily a long time, as at seeing the meddlesome lawyer tossed in a blanket in the King's Bench; and we should imagine there is a natural and inevitable connection between the performance of that gentle salutary mode of discipline, and the titillation of the lungs of the spectators. Madame Vestris played, sung, and looked the incorrigible Don John very prettily and spiritedly; but, we confess, we had rather see her petticoated than in a Spanish doublet and hose, hat and feather. Yet she gave a life to the scene, and Pluto relented as she sung. There is a pulpy softness and ripeness in her lips, a roseate hue, like the leaves of the damask rose, a luscious honeyed sound in her voice, a depth and fulness too, as if it were clogged with

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

its own secrets, a languid archness, an Italian lustre in her eye, an enchanting smile, a mouth—shall we go on? No. But she is more bewitching even than Miss Brunton. Yet we like to see her best in petticoats. It cannot be denied that Mrs. Gould (late Miss Burrell) of the Olympic, who played it first, was the girl to play Giovanni in London. She had a hooked nose, large staring eyes, a manlike voice, a tall person, a strut that became a rake.

'She forgot to be a woman : changed fear, and niceness,  
(The hand maids of all women, or more truly  
Woman its pretty-self) into a waggish courage;  
Ready in gibes, quick answered, saucy, and  
As quarrellous as the weasel.'

All this Madame Vestris attempts; but in spite of her efforts to the contrary, she shrinks back into feminine softness and delicacy, and her heart evidently fails her, and flutters, 'like a new ta'en sparrow,' in the midst of all her pretended swaggering and determination to brazen the matter out. On the night we saw this after-piece, Mr. Knight played Leporello, instead of Mr. Harley: so that we can praise neither.

### THE DRAMA : No. VIII

*The London Magazine.*

*August, 1820.*

It is now the middle of July, when we are by turns drenched with showers and scorched with sun-beams: the winter theatres are closed, and the summer ones have just opened, soon to close again—

'Like marigolds with the sun's eye.'

We are not, however, in the number of those who deprecate the shortness of the summer season, as one of the miseries of human life, or who think little theatres better than big. We like a play-house in proportion to the number of happy human faces it contains (and a play-house seldom contains many wretched ones)—and again we like a play best when we do not see the faces of the actors too near. We do not want to be informed, as at the little theatre in the Haymarket, that part of the rich humour of Mr. Liston's face arises from his having lost a tooth in front, nor to see Mr. Jones's eyes roll more meteorous than ever. At the larger theatres we only discover that the ladies paint red: at the smaller ones we can distinguish when they paint white. We see defects enough at a distance, and we can always get near enough (in the pit) to see the beauties. Those who go to the boxes do not go to see the play,

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but to make a figure, and be thought something of themselves (so far they probably succeed, at least in their own opinion): and if the Gods cannot hear, they make themselves heard. We do not like *private theatricals*. We like every thing to be what it is. We have no fancy for seeing the actors look like part of the audience, nor for seeing the pit invade the boxes, nor the boxes shake hands with the galleries. We are for a proper distinction of ranks—at the theatre. While we are laughing at the broad farcical humour of the Agreeable Surprise, or critically examining Mrs. Mardyn's dress in the Will, we do not care to be disturbed by some idle whisper, or mumbling disapprobation of an old beau, or antiquated dowager in a high head-dress, close at our ear, but in a different part of the house.—Mr. Arnold has taken care of this at the New English Opera-house in the Strand, of which he is proprietor and patentee. The 'Great Vulgar and the Small' (as Cowley has it) are there kept at a respectful distance. The boxes are perched up so high above the pit, that it gives you a head-ache to look up at the beauty and fashion that nightly adorn them with their thin and scattered constellations; and then the gallery is 'raised so high above all height,' it is nearly impossible for the eye to scale it, while a little miserable shabby upper-gallery is partitioned off with an iron railing, through which the poor one-shilling devils look like half-starved prisoners in the Fleet, and are a constant butt of ridicule to the genteeler rabble beneath them. Then again (so vast is Mr. Arnold's genius for separating and combining), you have a Saloon, a sweet pastoral retreat, where any love-sick melancholy swain, or romantic nymph, may take a rural walk to Primrose-hill, or Chalk-farm, by the side of painted purling streams, and sickly flowering shrubs, without once going out of the walls of the theatre:—

'Such tricks hath strong Imagination!'

If the Haymarket has been praised by a contemporary critic (of whom we might say, that he is *alter et idem*) for being as hot as an oven in the midst of the dog-days; the Lyceum, on the other hand, is as cool as a well; and much might, we think, be said on both sides. As a matter of taste, or fancy, or prejudice (we shall not pretend to say which), we do not greatly like the new English Opera-house. The house is *new*, the pieces are *new*, the company are *new*, and we do not know what to make of any of them. As to the things that are acted there, they are a sort of pert, patched-up, insipid, flippant attempt at mediocrity. They are like the odd-ends and scraps of all the rejected pieces, which have come into the manager's possession in virtue of his office for a length of time; and

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which he has stitched and tacked together in such a way that neither the authors nor the public can know any thing of the matter. They are a condensed essence of all the vapid stuff that has been suppressed at home or acted abroad for a number of years last past. Visions of farces, operas, and interludes, thin, blue, fluttering, gawzy appearances, mock the empty sight, elude the public comprehension, and the critic's grasp. The worst of these slender, wire-drawn productions is, that there is nothing to praise in them, nor any thing to condemn. They 'present no mark' to friend or foe. 'You may as well take aim at the edge of a pen-knife,' as try to pick any thing out of them. They are trifling, tedious, frivolous, and vexatious. The best is, they do not last long, and 'one bubble' (to borrow an illusion from an eloquent divine, in treating on a graver subject) 'knocks another on the head, and both rush together into oblivion!'—Miss Kelly is here; she might as well be a hundred miles off. She is not good at child's play, at the *make-believe* fine-lady, or the *make-believe* waiting-maid. Hers is *bona fide* downright acting, and she must have something to do, in order to do it properly. She is too clever and too knowing to act a part totally without meaning, such as that lately given her in the Promissory Note. Such was not her Yarico. Ah! there were tones, and looks, and piercing sighs in her representation of the fond, injured, sun-burnt Indian maid, that make it difficult to think of her in any inferior part, or to speak slightly of any theatre in which she is concerned: but critics, as it has been said of judges, must not give way to their feelings. There is Wrench here too, as easy as an old glove, the same careless, hair-brained, idle, impudent, good humoured, lackadaisical sort of a gentleman as ever; there is Harley too, who has not been spoiled by the town, since we first saw him here:—then there is Mr. Rowbotham, a grave young man, a new hand, very like the real, the prudent Mr. Thomas Inkle: *encore un coup*, we have Mr. Bartley, who, if not a new hand, is fresh returned from America, and as much at home on these boards as before he went abroad: in the Governor of Barbadoes, he had quite a Transatlantic look with him: there is also Mr. Westbourn (we think he is at this house) and a Mr. Wilkinson, and a Mr. Richardson (whose names and persons we are apt to confound together), and Mr. Pearman (whom it is not possible to mistake for any one else), and Miss Stevenson (a very provoking young thing), and Miss Love, and Mrs. Grove, and a whole *Sylva Critica* of actors and actresses, of whom the very nomenclature terrifies us. We give it up in despair: and so humbly take our leave of the New English Opera-house for the season!—'We had rather be taxed for silence, than checked for speech.'

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At the other house, to which we 'do more favourably incline,' both from old associations and immediate liking, though there are some raw recruits (picked up we don't know where), there is a large and powerful detachment from the veteran corps of Covent Garden; Terry, Jones, Mrs. Gibbs, Liston, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kemble, J. Russell, Farley, and Mrs. Mardyn and Madame Vestris from Drury Lane, and last, Miss R. Corri, from the Opera House. —In fact, it is our opinion that there is theatrical strength enough in this town only to set up one good summer or one good winter theatre. Competition may be necessary to prevent negligence and abuse, but the result of this distribution of the *corps dramatique* into different companies, is, that we never, or very rarely indeed, see a play well acted in all its parts. At Drury Lane there is only one tragic actor, Mr. Kean: all the rest are supernumeraries. No one, we apprehend, would ever cross the threshold to see Mr. Pope's Iago, or Mr. Elliston's Richmond, or Mr. Rae's Bassanio, or Mr. Hamblin, or Mr. Penley, or Mr. Fisher, or Mr. Philips, who plays the King in Hamlet: though, 'in the catalogue they go for actors.' In comedy, Drury Lane is better off: yet, they cannot get up a real sterling comedy, for want of actors and actresses to fill the parts of *gentlemen and ladies*. Miss Kelly is the best comic actress on either stage, but she is only an appendage to the real fine lady, Millamant's Mrs. Mincing, 'to curl her hair so crisp and pure:' in cases of necessity, they have no one but Mr. Penley, jun. to top the part of Lord Foppington: Mr. Munden is their Sir Peter Teazle, and Mr. Elliston is his own Lord Townley. But they really hit off a modern comedy, such as Wild Oats, which is a mixture of farce and romantic sentiment, to an exact perfection. At Covent Garden they lately had one great tragic actress, Miss O'Neill; and two or three actors who were highly respectable, at least in second-rate tragic characters. At present, the female throne in tragedy is vacant; and of the men 'who rant and fret their hour upon the stage,' Mr. Macready is the only one who draws houses, or who finds admirers. He shines most, however, in the pathos of domestic life; and we still want to see tragedy, 'turretted, crowned, and crested, with its front gilt, and blood-stained,' stooping from the skies (not raised from the earth) as it did in the person of John Kemble. He is now quaffing health and burgundy in the south of France. He perhaps finds the air that blows from the 'vine-covered hills' wholesomer than that of a crowded house; and the lengthened murmurs of the Mediterranean shores more soothing to the soul, than the deep thunders of the pit. Or does he sometimes recline his lofty, laurelled head upon the sea-beat beach, and unlocking the

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cells of memory, listen to the rolling Pæans, the loud never-to-be-forgotten plaudits of enraptured multitudes, that mingle with the music of the waves,

‘ And murmur as the Ocean murmurs near ? ’

Or does he still ‘ sigh his soul towards England ’ and the busy hum of Covent Garden ? If we thought so (but that we dread all returns from Elba), we would say to him, ‘ Come back, and once more bid Britannia rival old Greece and Rome ! ’—Or where is Mr. Young now ? There is an opening for *his* pretensions too.—If the Drury Lane company are deficient in genteel comedy, we fear that Covent Garden cannot help them out in this respect. Mr. W. Farren is the only exception to the sweeping clause we were going to insert against them. He plays the old gentleman, the antiquated beau of the last age, very much after the fashion that we remember to have seen in our younger days, and that is quite a singular excellence in this. Is it that Mr. Farren has caught glimpses of this character in real life, hovering in the horizon of the sister kingdom, which has been long banished from this ? They have their Castle Rack-rents, their moats and ditches, still extant in remote parts of the interior : and perhaps in famed Dublin city, the *cheveux-de-fris* of dress, the trellis-work of lace and ruffles, the masked battery of compliment, the port-cullises of formal speech, the whole artillery of sighs and ogling, with all the appendages and proper costume of the ancient regime, and paraphernalia of the *preux chevalier*, may have been kept up in a state of lively decrepitude and smiling dilapidation, in a few straggling instances from the last century, which Mr. Farren has seen. The present age produces nothing of the sort ; and so, according to our theory, Mr. Farren does not play the young gentleman or modern man of fashion, though he is himself a young man. For the rest, comedy is in a rich, thriving state at Covent-Garden, as far as the lower kind of comic humour is concerned ; but it is like an ill-baked pudding, where all the plums sink to the bottom. Emery and Liston, the two best, are of this description : Jones is a caricaturist ; and Terry, in his graver parts, is not a comedian, but a moralist.—Even a junction of the two companies into one would hardly furnish out one set of players competent to do justice to any of the standard productions of the English stage in tragedy or comedy : what a hopeful project it must be then to start a few more play-houses in the heart of the metropolis as nurseries of histrionic talent, still more to divide and dissipate what little concentration of genius we have, and still more to weaken and distract public patronage ? As to the argument in favour of two or more theatres

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from the necessity of competition, we shall not dispute it; but the actual benefits are not so visible to our dim eyes as to some others. There is a competition in what is bad as well as in what is good: the race of popularity is as often gained by tripping up the heels of your antagonist, as by pressing forward yourself: there is a competition in running an indifferent piece, or a piece indifferently acted, to prevent the success of the same piece at the other house; and there is a competition in puffing, as Mr. Elliston can witness.—No, there, we confess, he leaves all competition behind!

The two pleasantest pieces we have seen this season at the Haymarket are the *Green Man*, and *Pigeons and Crows*. They were both to us an Agreeable Surprise; for we had not seen them when they were brought out last year, or the year before. The first is moral and pointed; the latter more lively and quaint. The *Green Man* abounds in laconic good sense: in *Pigeons and Crows* there is as edifying a vein of nonsense. We do not know the author of this last piece (to whom we confess ourselves obliged for two mirthful, thoughtless evenings), but we understand that the *Green Man* is adapted by Mr. Jones from a French *petite pièce*, which was itself taken from a German novel, we believe one of Kotzebue's. The sentiments indeed are evidently of that romantic, levelling cast, which formerly abounded in the writings of the *ci-devant* philanthropic enthusiast. The principal character in it is that of the *Green Man* himself, who is a benevolent, blunt-spoken, friendly cynic. The only joke of the character consists in his being dressed all in green—he has a green coat, a green waistcoat and breeches, green stockings, a green hat, a green pocket handkerchief, and a green watch. This gives rise to many pleasant allusions; and indeed, from the manner in which the peculiarity of his personal appearance affects our notion of his personal identity, he looks like a talking suit of clothes, a sermonizing and sententious vegetable. Mr. Terry performs the part admirably, and seems himself transformed into 'a brother of the groves.' He does not aggravate the author's meaning too much, but gives just as much point as was intended, and passes on to what comes next, as naturally, and with that sort of manner and unconscious interest which a man really takes in his own, or other people's affairs. Mr. Terry's acting always shows vigour and good sense. His only fault is, that he is too jealous of himself, and strives to do better than well. In the *Green Man* he was quite at home, and quite at his ease; and made every one else feel equally so. Mr. Jones is an overstarched French fop in this play, full of foreign grimace and affectation, of which, however, he is cured by his passion for the fair ward of the *Green Man* (Miss Leigh, a very pleasing new actress),

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

who does not at all tolerate such impertinence, and he afterwards turns out (*dandyism* apart) a very good sort of a humane character. Perhaps, enough has never been made on the stage of the frequent contradiction in this respect between outside appearances and sterling qualities within. We carry our prejudices both for and against dress too far. It is no rule either way. A fop is not necessarily a fool, nor without feeling. A man may even wear stays, and not be effeminate; or a pink coat, without making his friends blush for him. The celebrated beau, Hervey, threw the scavenger that ridiculed him into his own mud-cart; and a person in our own time, who has carried extravagance of dress and appearance to a very great pitch indeed, is, in reality, a very good-natured, sensible, modest man. The fault, in such cases, is neither in the head nor heart, but in the cut of a coat-collar, or the size of a pair of whiskers.—Farley and J. Russell were Major Dumpling and Captain Bibber in the same piece: and a scene of high farce they made of it. The one is an officer in the army, the *local militia*; the other is an officer in the navy. The one excels in eating, the other in drinking. The one is most at home in the kitchen, the other in the cellar. The one is fat, huge, and unwieldy; the other, dapper, tight, and bustling. Farley is an actor with whose merit, in such parts, the public are well acquainted: Russell is one who will be liked more, the more he is known. Both in Captain Bibber, Blondeau, the French showman in Pigeons and Crows, and in Silvester Daggerwood, he has acquitted himself with great applause, and entered into the humour, eccentricity, and peculiar distinctions of his characters, with spirit and fidelity. His mimicry is also good, and he sings a French rondeau, or a sailor's ditty, *con amore*. The part of Major Dumpling was originally played by Mr. Tokely. It was one of three parts (Crockery and Peter Pastoral were the other two) for which he seemed born, and having rolled himself up in them, like the silk-worm, he died. Poor Tokely! He relished his parts; with Crockery doated over an old sign-post, or wept with honest Peter over a green leaf.

'His tears were tears of oil and gladness.'

But he also relished his morning's draught, and sipped the sweets till he was drowned in a butt of whiskey. The said fair-looking, round-faced, pot-bellied, uncouth, awkward, out-of-the-way, unmeaning, inimitable Crockery, or Peter Pastoral, or Major Dumpling, was the very little child that, in the year 1796, Kemble used to carry off triumphantly on his arm in the original performance of Pizarro! Thinking of these things, may we not say, *sic transit gloria mundi*? So flies the stage away, and life flies after it as fast!—Mrs. Gibbs,

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'that horse-whipping woman,' in 'Teazing made Easy,' does not, however, wear the willow on his account, but looks as smiling, as good-humoured, as buxom, as in the natural and professional life-time of Mr. Tokely, and drinks her bowl of cream as Cowslip, and expresses her liking of a roast-duck with the same resignation of flesh and spirit as ever.

Mr. Liston in Pigeons and Crows plays the part of Sir Peter Pigwiggin, knight, alderman, and pin-maker. What a name, what a person, and what a representative! We never saw Mr. Liston's countenance in better preservation; that is, it seems tumbling all in pieces with indescribable emotions, and a thousand odd twitches, and unaccountable absurdities, oozing out at every pore. His jaws seem to ache with laughter: his eyes look out of his head with wonder: his face is unctuous all over and bathed with jests; the tip of his nose is tickled with conceit of himself, and his teeth chatter in his head in the eager insinuation of a plot: his forehead speaks, and his wig (not every particular hair, but the whole bewildered bushy mass) 'stands on end as life were in it.' In the scene with his dulcinea (Miss Leigh) his approaches are the height of self-complacent, *cockney* courtship; his rhymes on his own projected marriage,

'What a thing!  
Bless the King!'

would make any man (who is not so already) loyal, and his laughing in the glass when he is told by mistake that Miss's mamma is eighteen, and his convulsive distortions as he recovers from his first surprise, and the choking effects of it, out-Hogarth Hogarth!

'Let those laugh now who never laugh'd before,  
And those who still have laugh'd, now laugh the more.'

The scene where he is told he is poisoned, and his interview with the drunken apothecary (Mr. Williams), though excellent in themselves, were not so good: for Liston does not play so well to any one else, as he does to himself. The rest of the characters were well supported. Jones, as the younger Pigwiggin, alias Captain Neville, the lover of Liston's fair inamorata, 'does a little bit of fidgets' very well. He is sprightly, voluble, knowing, and pleasant; and is the life of a small theatre, only that he is now and then a little too obstreperous; but he keeps up the interest of his part, and that is every thing. The audience delight to hear his 'View Halloa' before he comes on the stage (which is a sure sign of their opinion), and expect to be amused for the next ten minutes. If an actor can excite hope, and not disappoint it, what can he do more? Mr. Russell, as

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the little French showman, Mr. Farley as Mr. Wadd, and Mr. Connor as a blundering Irish servant, all sustained their parts with great *éclat*: and so did the ladies. The scene where Jones deceives two of his creditors, Russell and Farley, by appointing each to pay the other, had a very laughable effect; but the stratagem is borrowed from Congreve, who indeed was not the very worst source to borrow from.

The house was crowded to excess to see the new appearances in the Beggar's Opera; Madame Vestris's Captain Macheath, Miss R. Corri's Polly, and Mrs. Charles Kemble's Lucy, which last, indeed, is an old friend with a new face. Mrs. Kemble was the best Lucy we ever saw (not excepting Miss Kelly, who is also much at home in this part), and she retains all the spirit of her original performances. Miss Kelly plays Lucy as naturally, perhaps more so; but Mrs. Kemble does it more characteristically. She has no 'compunctious visitings' of delicacy, but her mind seems hardened against the walls that enclose it. She is Lockett's daughter, the child of a prison; the true virago, that is to be the foil to the gentle spirit of Polly. The air with which she throws the rat to the cat in the song has a *gusto* worthy of one of Michael Angelo's Sybils; a box on the ear from her right hand is no jesting matter. Her rage and sullenness are of the true unmitigated stamp, and her affected civilities to her fair rival are a parody (as the author intended) on the friendships of courts.—Madame Vestris, as the Captain, almost shrunk before her, like Viola before her enraged enemies. Indeed, she played the part very prettily, with great vivacity and an agreeable swagger, cocking her hat, throwing back her shoulders, and making a free use of a rattan-cane, like Little Pickle, but she did not look like the hero, or the highwayman, if this was desirable in her case. If, however, she turned Macheath into a *petit-maitre*, she did not play it like Mr. Incledon or Mr. Cooke, or Mr. Braham, or Mr. Young, or any one else we have seen in it, which is no small commendation. Miss Corri sang *Cease your funning*, and one or two other songs, with sweetness and effect; but, in general, she was more like a modern made-up boarding-school girl, than the artless and elegant Polly. She lisps and looks pretty. The other parts were very respectably filled, but some of the best scenes (we are sorry to say it) were left out.

### THE DRAMA: No. IX

*The London Magazine.*

September, 1820.

DRURY LANE.—The following is a play-bill of this theatre, for which we paid two-pence on the spot, to verify the fact—as some

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well-disposed persons, to prevent mistakes, purchase libellous or blasphemous publications from their necessitous or desperate vendors.

*Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.*—Agreeably to the former advertisement, this theatre is now open for the last performances of Mr. Kean, before his positive departure for America. This evening, Saturday, August 19, 1820, his Majesty's servants will perform Shakespear's tragedy of Othello. Duke of Venice, Mr. Thompson; Brabantio, Mr. Powell; Gratiano, Mr. Carr; Lodovico, Mr. Vining; Montano, Mr. Jeffries; Othello, MR. KEAN—(his last appearance in that character); Cassio, Mr. Bromley—(his first appearance in that character); Roderigo, Mr. Russell; Iago, Junius Brutus Booth; Leonardo, Mr. Hudson; Julio, Mr. Raymond; Manco, Mr. Moreton; Paulo, Mr. Read; Giovanni, Mr. Starmer; Luca, Mr. Randall; Desdemona, Mrs. W. West; Emilia, Mrs. Egerton—This theatre overflows every night. The patentees cannot condescend to enter into a competition of security which is only fitted for minor theatres—what their powers really are, will be, without any public appeal, legally decided in November next, and any gasconade can only be supposed to be caused by cunning or poverty.—After which, the farce of Modern Antiques, &c.

A more impudent puff, and heartless piece of bravado than this, we do not remember to have witnessed. *This theatre does not overflow every night.* As to the competition of scurrility, which the manager declines, it is he who has commenced it. The minor theatres—that is, one of them—to wit, the Lyceum—put forth a very proper and well-grounded remonstrance against this portentous opening of the winter theatre in the middle of the dog-days, to scorch up the dry, meagre, hasty harvest of the summer ones:—at which our mighty manager sets up his back, like the great cat, Rodilardus; scornfully rejects their appeal to the public; says he will pounce upon them in November with the law in his hands; and that, in the mean time, all they can do to interest the public in their favour by a plain statement of facts, 'can only be supposed to be caused by *cunning* or *poverty*.' This is pretty well for a manager who has been so *thanked* as Mr. Elliston! His own committee may laud him for bullying other theatres, but the public will have a feeling for his weaker rivals, though the angry comedian 'should threaten to swallow them up quick,' and vaunt of his action of battery against them, without any public appeal, 'when wind and rain beat dark November down.' This sorry manager, 'dressed' (to use the words of the immortal bard, whom he so modestly and liberally patronises) 'dressed in a little brief authority, plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven,'—not 'as make the angels weep,'—but his own candle-snuffers laugh, and his own scene-shifters blush. He ought to be ashamed of himself. Why, what a beggarly account of wretched actors, what an exposure of the nakedness of the land, have we in this very play-bill, which is issued forth with such a mixture of pomp and imbecility! Mr.

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Kean's name, indeed, stands pre-eminent in lordly capitals, in defiance of Mr. Dowton's resentment,—and Junius Brutus Booth, in his way, scorns to be *Mistered*! But all the rest are, we suppose—Mr. Elliston's friends. They are happy in the favour of the manager, and in the total ignorance of the town! Mr. Kean, we grant, is in himself a host; a sturdy column, supporting the tottering, tragic dome of Drury Lane! What will it be when this main, this sole striking pillar is taken away—'You take my house, when you do take the prop that holds my house'—when the patentees shall have nothing to look to for salvation but the puffing of the Great Lessee, and his genius for law, which we grant may rival the Widow Blackacre's—and when the cries of Othello, of Macbeth, of Richard, and Sir Giles, in the last agonies of their despair, shall be lost, through all the long winter months, 'over a vast and unhearing ocean'? Mr. Elliston, instead of taking so much pains to announce his own approaching dissolution, had better let Mr. Kean pass in silence, and take his *positive departure for America* without the pasting of placards, and the dust and clatter of a law-suit in Westminster Hall. It is not becoming in him, W. R. Elliston, Esq., comedian, formerly proprietor of the Surrey and the Olympic, and author of a pamphlet on the unwarrantable encroachments of the Theatres-royal, now to insult over the plea of self-defence and self-preservation, set up by his brethren of the minor play-houses, as the resource of 'poverty and cunning!'—'It is not friendly, it is not gentlemanly. The profession, as well as Mr. Arnold, may blame him for it:' but the patentees will no doubt thank him at their next quarterly meeting.

Mr. Kean's Othello the other night did not quite answer our over-wrought expectations. He played it *with variations*; and therefore, necessarily worse. There is but one perfect way of playing Othello, and that was the way in which he used to play it. To see him in this character at his best, may be reckoned among the consolations of the human mind. It is to feel our hearts bleed by sympathy with another; it is to vent a world of sighs for another's sorrows; to have the loaded bosom 'cleansed of that perilous stuff that weighs upon the soul,' by witnessing the struggles and the mortal strokes that 'flesh is heir to.' We often seek this deliverance from private woes through the actor's obstetric art; and it is hard when he disappoints us, either from indifference or wilfulness. Mr. Kean did not repeat his admired farewell apostrophe to Content, with that fine 'organ-stop' that he used,—as if his inmost vows and wishes were ascending to the canopy of Heaven, and their sounding echo were heard upon the earth like distant thunder,—but in a querulous

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whining, sobbing tone, which we do not think right. Othello's spirit does not sink under, but supports itself on the retrospect of the past; and we should hear the lofty murmurs of his departing hopes, his ambition and his glory, borne onward majestically 'to the passing wind.' He pronounced the 'not a jot, not a jot,' as an hysteric exclamation, not with the sudden stillness of fixed despair. As we have seen him do this part before, his lips uttered the words, but they produced and were caused by no corresponding emotion in his breast. They were breath just playing on the surface of his mind, but that did not penetrate to the soul. His manner of saying to Cassio, 'But never more be officer of mine,' was in a tone truly terrific, magnificent, prophetic; and the only alteration we remarked as an improvement. We have adverted to this subject here, because we think Mr. Kean cannot wisely outdo himself. He is always sufficiently original, sufficiently in extremes, and when he attempts to vary from himself, and go still farther, we think he has no alternative but to run into extravagance. It is true it may be said of him that he is—

'Never so sure our passion to create,  
As when he treads the brink of all we hate—'

but still one step over the precipice is destruction. We also fear that the critical soil of America is slippery ground. Jonathan is inclined to the safe side of things, even in matters of taste and fancy. They are a little formal and common-place in those parts. They do not like liberties in morals, nor excuse poetical licenses. They do not tolerate the privileges of birth, or readily sanction those of genius. A very little excess above the water-mark of mediocrity is with them quite enough. Mr. Kean will do well not to offend by extraordinary efforts, or dazzling eccentricities. He should be the Washington of actors, the modern Fabius. If he had been educated in the fourth form of St. Paul's school, like some other top-tragedians that we know, we should say to him, in classic terms, *in medio tutissimus ibis*. 'Remember that they hiss the Beggar's Opera in America. If they do not spare Captain Macheath, do you think they will spare you? Play off no pranks in the United States. Do not think to redeem great vices by great virtues. They are inexorable to the one, and insensible to the other. Reserve all works of supererogation till you come back, and have safely run the gauntlet of New York, of Philadelphia, of Baltimore, and Boston. Think how Mr. Young would act,—and act with a little more meaning, and a little less pomp than he would—who, we are assured on credible authority, is that model of indifference that the New World would worship and bow down before.'—We have made bold to offer this advice, because we

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wish well to Mr. Kean; and because we wish to think as well as possible of a republican public. We watch both him and them 'with the rooted malice of a friend.' We have thus paid our respects to Old Drury in holiday-time; and thought we had already taken leave of the New English Opera-house for the season. But there were Two Words to that bargain. The farce with this title is a very lively little thing, worth going to see; and the new Dramatic Romance (or whatever it is called) of the Vampyre is, upon the whole, the most splendid *spectacle* we have ever seen. It is taken from a French piece, founded on the celebrated story so long bandied about between Lord Byron, Mr. Shelley, and Dr. Polidori, which last turned out to be the true author. As a mere fiction, and as a fiction attributed to Lord Byron, whose genius is chartered for the land of horrors, the original story passed well enough: but on the stage it is a little shocking to the feelings, and incongruous to the sense, to see a spirit in human shape,—in the shape of a real Earl, and, what is more, of a *Scotch* Earl—going about seeking whom it may marry and then devour, to lengthen out its own abhorred and anomalous being. Allowing for the preternatural atrocity of the fable, the situations were well imagined and supported: the acting of Mr. T. P. Cooke (from the Surry Theatre) was spirited and imposing, and certainly Mrs. W. H. Chatterley, as the daughter of his friend the Baron (Mr. Bartley), and his destined bride, bid fair to be a very delectable victim. She is however saved in a surprising manner, after a rapid succession of interesting events, to the great joy of the spectator. The scenery of this piece is its greatest charm, and it is inimitable. We have seen sparkling and overpowering effects of this kind before; but to the splendour of a transparency were here added all the harmony and mellowness of the finest painting. We do not speak of the vision at the beginning, or of that at the end of the piece,—though these were admirably managed,—so much as of the representation of the effects of moonlight on the water and on the person of the dying knight. The hue of the sea-green waves, floating in the pale beam under an arch-way of grey weather-beaten rocks, and with the light of a torch glaring over the milder radiance, was in as fine keeping and strict truth as Claude or Rembrandt, and would satisfy, we think, the most fastidious artist's eye. It lulled the sense of sight as the fancied sound of the dashing waters soothed the imagination. In the scene where the moonlight fell on the dying form of Ruthven (the Vampyre) it was like a fairy glory, forming a palace of emerald light: the body seemed to drink its balmy essence, and to revive in it without a miracle. The line,

'See how the moon sleeps with Endymion,'

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came into the mind from the beauty and gorgeousness of the picture, notwithstanding the repugnance of every circumstance and feeling. This melodrama succeeds very well; and it succeeds in spite of Mr. Kean's last nights, and without Miss Kelly!

At the Haymarket there has been a new comedy, called the Diamond Ring, or Exchange no Robbery. It is said to be by Mr. Theodore Hook. We should not wonder. The morality, and the sentiment are very flat, and very offensive; we mean, all the half platonic, half serious love scenes between Sir Lennox Leinster (Mr. Conner), and Lady Cranberry (Mrs. Mardyn). This actress,—young, handsome, and full of spirits as she is, and as the character she represents is supposed to be,—and married to an old husband, who is always grumbling, and complaining,—does not appear fitted to be engaged in half an amour; nor as if she would excuse Sir Lennox for being 'figurative,' in that way. Her conduct is at least equivocal, and without any ostensible motive but a gross one, which yet she does not acknowledge to herself. A Milan commission would inevitably have ruined her, even though Sir Lennox had been a less likely man than a well-looking, impudent, Irish Baronet. His personal pretensions are certainly formidable to her jealous spouse (Mr. Terry, an Adonis of sixty)—though it is hard to find out the charms in his conversation that recommend him so powerfully to the friendship of the lady. He has one joke, one flower of rhetoric, interspersed through all his discourse, witty or amorous—the cant phrase, 'You'll excuse my being figurative.' His metaphorical turn would not however have been excused, but for the matter-of-fact notions and accomplishments of Mr. Liston—who plays a *bona-fide* pot boy in the comic group, the supposed son of old Cranberry, but the real and proper off-spring of old Swipes, the landlord of The Pig and Gridiron. This hopeful young gentleman has been palmed upon his pretended father (to the no small mortification and dismay of both parties) instead of the intrepid Lieutenant Littleworth (Mr. Barnard), the true heir to the Cranberry estate and honours. Liston, as young Swipes, has nothing genteel about him; not even the wish to be so. His inclinations are low. Thus he likes to drink with the butler; makes a young blackamore, whom he calls 'snowdrop,' drunk with claret, and is in love with Miss Polly Watts, who has red hair, a red face, and red elbows. He has vowed to elope with her before that day week, and make her Mrs. C., and would no doubt have been as good as his word if the secret of his birth had not been discovered by his mother-in-law, in revenge for a matrimonial squabble; and the whole ends, as a three-act piece should do—abruptly but agreeably. Mr. Liston's acting in such a character as we have described, it is

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needless to add, was infinitely droll, and Terry was a father worthy (*pro tempore*) of such a son.

The Manager of the English Opera-house on Monday, 21st ult., brought out an occasional farce against the Manager of Drury Lane, called Patent Seasons; deprecating the encroachments of the winter theatres, and predicting that, in consequence, 'the English Opera would soon be a Beggar's Opera.' His hits at his overbearing rival were good, and *told*; but the confession of the weakness and 'poverty,' which Mr. Elliston had thrown in his teeth, rather served to damp than excite the enthusiasm of the audience. Every one is inclined to run away from a falling house; and of all appeals, that to humanity should be the last. The town may be bullied, ridiculed, wheedled, *puffed* out of their time and money, but to ask them to sink their patronage in a bankrupt concern, is to betray an ignorance of the world, who sympathise with the prosperous, and laugh at injustice. Generosity is the last infirmity of the public mind. Pity is a frail ground of popularity: and 'misery doth part the flux of company.' If you want the assistance of others, put a good face upon the matter, and conceal it from them that you want it. Do not whine and look piteous in their faces, or they will treat you like a dog. The 170 families that Mr. Arnold tells us depend upon his minor theatre for support are not 'Russian sufferers,' nor sufferers in a triumphant cause. Talk of 170 distressed families dependent on a distressed manager (not an autocrat of one vast theatre), and the sound hangs like a mill-stone on the imagination, 'or load to sink a navy.' The audience slink away, one by one, willing to slip their necks out of it. *Charity is cold.*

The Manager of the English Opera-house, however, does not stand alone in his difficulties. The theatres in general seem to totter, and feel the hand of decay. Even the King's Theatre, we understand, has manifested signs of decrepitude, and 'palsied eld,' and stopped,—we do not say its payments, but its performances. Of all the theatres, we should feel the least compassion for the deserted saloons and tattered hangings of the Italian Opera. We should rather indeed see it flourish, as it has long flourished, in splendour and in honour: we do not like 'to see a void made in the Drama: any ruin on the face of the land.' But this would touch us the least. We might be disposed to write its epitaph, not its elegy.

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## THE DRAMA: No. XI

*The London Magazine.*

*December, 1820.*

'At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue :  
To-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new.'

WHY was not this No. XII. instead of No. XI. of the Acted Drama in London? Had we but seen No. XII. at the head of our article for December, we had been happy, 'as broad and casing as the general air, whole as the marble, founded as the rock,' but now we are 'cooped and cabined in by saucy doubts and fears.' Had No. XI. been ready in time, we should have been irreproachable 'in act and complement extern,' which is with us every thing. Punctuality is 'the immediate jewel of our souls.' We leave it to others to be shrewd, ingenious, witty and wise; to think deeply, and write finely; it is enough for us to be exactly dull. The categories of *number* and *quantity* are what we chiefly delight in; for on these depend (by arithmetical computation) the pounds, shillings, and pence. We suspect that those writers only trouble their heads about fame, who cannot get any thing more substantial for what they write; and are in fact equally at a loss for 'solid pudding or for empty praise.' That is not the case with us. We have money in our purse, and reputation—to spare. Nothing troubles us but that our article on the drama was wanting for November—on this point we are inconsolable. No more delight in regularity—no more undisturbed complacency in the sense of arduous duty conscientiously discharged—no more confidence in meeting our Editors—no more implicit expectation of our monthly decisions on the part of the public! As the Italian poet for one error of the press, in a poem presented to the Pope, died of chagrin, so we for one deficiency in this series of Dramatic Criticisms (complete but for that) must resign! We have no other way left to appease our scrupulous sense of critical punctilio. That there was but one link wanting, is no matter—

'Tenth or ten thousandth break the chain alike.'

There was one Number (the eleventh) of the LONDON MAGAZINE, of which the curious reader turned over the pages with eager haste, and found no Drama—a thing never to be remedied! It was no fault of ours that it was so. A friend hath done this. The author of the Calendar of Nature (a pleasing and punctual performance) has spoiled our Calendar of Art, and robbed us of that golden rigol of periodical praise, that we had in fancy 'bound our brows withal.' With the month our contribution to the stock of literary amusement

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and scientific intelligence returned without fail. In January, we gave an account of all the actors we had ever seen or heard of. In February, we confined ourselves to Miss O'Neill. In March, we expatiated at large on the Minor Theatres, and took great delight in the three Miss Dennetts. In April (being at Ilminster, a pretty town in the Vale of Taunton, and thence passing on to the Lamb at Hindon, a dreary spot), we proved at these two places, sitting in an arm-chair by a sea-coal fire, very satisfactorily, and without fear of contradiction,—neither Mr. Maturin, Mr. Shiel, nor Mr. Milman being present,—that no modern author could write a tragedy. In May, we wrote an article which filled the proper number of columns, though we forget what it was about. In June, we had to show that a modern author had written a tragedy (Virginius)—an opinion, which, though it overset our theory, we are by no means desirous to retract. We still say, that that play is better than Bertram, though Mr. Maturin, in the Preface to Melmoth, says it is not. As in June we were not dry, neither in July were we droughty. We found something to say in this and the following month without being much indebted to the actors or actresses, though, if Miss Tree came out in either of those months, we ought to recollect it, and mark the event with a *white stone*. We had rather hear her sing in ordinary cases than Miss Stephens, though not in extraordinary ones. By the bye, when will that little pouting<sup>1</sup> slut, with crystalline eyes and voice, return to us from the sister island? The Dublin critics hardly pretend to keep her to themselves, on the ground that they (like the Edinburgh wags) are better judges and patrons of merit, than we of famous London town.—The Irish are impudent: but they are not so impudent as the Scotch. This is a digression. To proceed.—In August, we had a skirmish with the facetious and biting Janus, of versatile memory, on his assumed superiority in dramatic taste and

<sup>1</sup> 'Or mouth with slumbry pout.' Keats's *Endymion*.

The phrase might be applied to Miss Stephens: though it is a vile phrase, worse than Hamlet's 'beautified' applied to Ophelia. Indeed it has been remarked that Mr. Keats resembles Shakspeare in the novelty and eccentricity of his combinations of style. If so, it is the only thing in which he is like Shakspeare: and yet Mr. Keats, whose misfortune and crime it is, like Milton, to have been born in London, is a much better poet than Mr. Wilson, or his Patroclus Mr. Lockart; nay, further, if Sir Walter Scott (the sly Ulysses of the Auld Reekie school,) had written many of the passages in Mr. Keats's poems, they would have been quoted as the most beautiful in his works. We do not here (on the banks of the Thames) damn the Scotch novels in the lump, because the writer is a *Sawney Scot*. But the sweet Edinburgh wits damn Mr. Keats's lines in the lump, because he is born in London. 'Oh Scotland, judge of England, what a treasure hast thou in one fair son, and one fair son-in-law, neither of whom (by all accounts) thou lovest passing well!'

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skill, when we corrected him for his contempt of court—and the Miss Dennetts, our wards in criticism. In September, we got an able article written for us; for we flatter ourselves, that we not only say good things ourselves, but are the cause of them in others. In October, we called Mr. Elliston to task for taking, in his vocation of manager, improper liberties with the public. But in November (may that dark month stand aye accursed in the Calendar!) we failed, and failed, as how? Our friend, the ingenious writer aforesaid (one of the most ingenious and sharp-witted men of his age, but not so remarkable for the virtue of *reliability* as Mr. Coleridge's friend, the poet-laureate), was to take a mutton-chop with us, and afterwards we were to go to the play, and club our forces in a criticism—but he never came, *we* never went to the play (The Stranger with Charles Kemble as the hero, and a new Mrs. Haller), and the criticism was never written. The Drama of the *London Magazine* for that month is left a blank!—We were in hopes that our other contributors might have been proportionably on the alert; but, on the contrary, we were sorry to hear it remarked by more than one person, that the *Magazine* for November was, on the whole, dull. There was no *Table-Talk*, for instance, an article which we take up immediately after we have perused our own, and seldom lay it down till we get to the end of it, though we think the papers too long. We are glad to see the notice from the redoubtable LION'S HEAD of No. v. for the present Number, for we understand that a Cockney, in clandestine correspondence with Blackwood, on looking for it in the last, and finding it *missing*, had sent off instant word, that the writer 'was expelled' from the *London Magazine*. We are sure we should be sorry for that.

If theatrical criticisms were only written when there is something worth writing about, it would be hard upon us who live by them. Are we not to receive our quarter's salary (like Mr. Croker in the piping time of peace) because Mrs. Siddons has left the stage, and 'has not left her peer'; or because John Kemble will not return to it with renewed health and vigour, to prop a falling house, and falling art; or because Mr. Kean has gone to America; or because Mr. Wallack has arrived from that country? No; the duller the stage grows, the gayer and more edifying must we become in ourselves: the less we have to say about that, the more room we have to talk about other things. Now would be the time for Mr. Coleridge to turn his talents to account, and write for the stage, when there is no topic to confine his pen, or, 'constrain his genius by mastery.' 'With mighty wings outspread, his imagination might brood over the void and make it pregnant.' Under the assumed head of the Drama, he might unfold the whole mysteries of Swedenborg, or ascend the

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third heaven of invention with Jacob Behmen: he might write a treatise on all the unknown sciences, and finish the Encyclopedia Metropolitana in a pocket form:—nay, he might bring to a satisfactory close his own dissertation on the difference between the Imagination and the Fancy,<sup>1</sup> before, in all probability, another great actor appears, or another tragedy or comedy is written. He is the man of all others to swim on empty bladders in a sea, without shore or soundings: to drive an empty stage-coach without passengers or lading, and arrive behind his time; to write marginal notes without a text; to look into a millstone to foster the rising genius of the age; to 'see merit in the chaos of its elements, and discern perfection in the great obscurity of nothing,' as his most favourite author, Sir Thomas Brown, has it on another occasion. Alas! we have no such creative talents: we cannot amplify, expand, raise our flimsy discourse, as the gaseous matter fills and lifts the round, glittering, slow-sailing balloon, to 'the up-turned eyes of wondering mortals.' Here is our bill of fare for the month, our list of memoranda—The French dancers—Farren's Deaf Lover—Macready's Zanga—Mr. Cooper's Romeo. A new farce, not acted a second time—Wallace, a tragedy,—and Mr. Wallack's Hamlet. Who can make any thing of such a beggarly account as this? Not we. Yet as poets at a pinch invoke the Muse, so we, for once, will invoke Mr. Coleridge's better genius, and thus we hear him talk, diverting our attention from the players and the play.

'The French, my dear H——,' would he begin, 'are not a people of imagination. They have so little, that you cannot persuade them to conceive it possible that they have none. They have no poetry, no such thing as genius, from the age of Louis xiv. It was that, their boasted Augustan age, which stamped them French, which put the seal upon their character, and from that time nothing has grown up original or luxuriant, or spontaneous among them; the whole has been cast in a mould, and that a bad one. Montaigne and Rabelais (their two greatest men, the one for thought, and the other for imaginative humour,—for the distinction between imagination and fancy holds in ludicrous as well as serious composition) I consider as Franks rather than Frenchmen, for in their time the national literature was not *set*, was neither mounted on stilts, nor buckramed in stays. Wit they had too, if I could persuade myself that Molière was a genuine Frenchman, but I cannot help suspecting that his mother played his reputed father false, and that an Englishman begot him. I am sure his genius is English; and his wit not of the

<sup>1</sup> The Fancy is not used here in the sense of Mr. Peter Corcoran, but in a sense peculiar to Mr. Coleridge, and hitherto undefined by him.

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Parisian cut. As a proof of this, see how his most extravagant farces, the Mock-doctor, Barnaby Rudge, &c. take with us. What can be more to the taste of our *bourgeoisie*, more adapted to our native tooth, than his Country Wife, which Wycherley did little else than translate into English? What success a translator of Racine into our vernacular tongue would meet with, I leave you to guess. His tragedies are not poetry, are not passion, are not imagination: they are a parcel of set speeches, of epigrammatic conceits, of declamatory phrases, without any of the glow, and glancing rapidity, and principle of fusion in the mind of the poet, to agglomerate them into grandeur, or blend them into harmony. The principle of the imagination resembles the emblem of the serpent, by which the ancients typified wisdom and the universe, with undulating folds, for ever varying and for ever flowing into itself,—circular, and without beginning or end. The definite, the fixed, is death: the principle of life is the indefinite, the growing, the moving, the continuous. But every thing in French poetry is cut up into shreds and patches, little flowers of poetry, with tickets and labels to them, as when the daughters of Jason minced and hacked their old father into collops—we have the *disjecta membra poeta*—not the entire and living man. The spirit of genuine poetry should inform the whole work, should breathe through, and move, and agitate the complete mass, as the soul informs and moves the limbs of a man, or as the vital principle (whatever it be) permeates the veins of the loftiest trees, building up the trunk, and extending the branches to the sun and winds of heaven, and shooting out into fruit and flowers. This is the progress of nature and of genius. This is the true poetic faculty; or that which the Greeks literally called *ποίησις*. But a French play (I think it is Schlegel, who somewhere makes the comparison, though I had myself, before I ever read Schlegel, made the same remark) is like a child's garden set with slips of branches and flowers, stuck in the ground, not growing in it. We may weave a gaudy garland in this manner, but it withers in an hour: while the products of genius and nature give out their odours to the gale, and spread their tints in the sun's eye, age after age—

“Outlast a thousand storms, a thousand winters,  
Free from the Sirian star, free from the thunder stroke,”

and flourish in immortal youth and beauty. Every thing French is, in the way of it, frittered into parts: every thing is therefore dead and ineffective. French poetry is just like chopped logic: nothing comes of it. There is no life of mind: neither the birth nor generation of knowledge. It is all patch-work, all sharp points and angles,

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all superficial. They receive, and give out sensation, too readily for it ever to amount to a sentiment. They cannot even dance, as you may see. There is, I am sure you will agree, no expression, no grace in their dancing. Littleness, point, is what damns them in all they do. With all their vivacity, and animal spirits, they dance not like men and women under the impression of certain emotions, but like puppets; they twirl round like *tourniquets*. Not to feel, and not to think, is all they know of this art or any other. You might swear that a nation that danced in that manner would never produce a true poet or philosopher. They have it not in them. There is not the principle of cause and effect. They make a sudden turn because there is no reason for it: they stop short, or move fast, only because you expect something else. Their style of dancing is difficult: would it were impossible.’<sup>1</sup> (By this time several persons in the pit had turned round to listen to this uninterrupted discourse, and our eloquent friend went on, rather raising his voice with a *Paulo majora canamus*.) ‘Look at that Mademoiselle Milanie with “the foot of fire,” as she is called. You might contrive a paste-board figure, with the help of strings or wires, to do all, and more, than she does—to point the toe, to raise the leg, to jerk the body, to run like wild-fire. Antics are not grace: to dance is not to move against time. My dear H——, if you could see a dance by some Italian peasant-girls in the Campagna of Rome, as I have, I am sure your good taste and good sense would approve it. They came forward slow and smiling, but as if their limbs were steeped in luxury, and every motion seemed an echo of the music, and the heavens looked on serener as they trod. You are right about the Miss Dennetts, though you have all the cant-phrases against you. It is true, they break down in some of their steps, but it is like “the lily drooping on its stalk green,” or like “the flowers Proserpina let fall from Dis’s waggon.” Those who cannot see grace in the youth and inexperience of these charming girls, would see no beauty in a cluster of hyacinths, bent with the morning dew. To shew at once what is, and is not French, there is Mademoiselle Hullin, she is Dutch. Nay, she is just like a Dutch doll, as round-faced, as rosy, and looks for all the world as if her limbs were made of wax-work, and would take in pieces, but not as if she could move them of her own accord. Alas, poor tender thing! As to the men, I confess’ (this was said to me in an audible whisper, lest it might be construed into a breach of confidence) ‘I should like, as Southey says, to have them *hamstrung*!’—(At this moment Monsieur Hullin *Pere* looked as if this

<sup>1</sup> This expression is borrowed from Dr. Johnson. However, as Dr. Johnson is not a German critic, Mr. C. need not be supposed to acknowledge it.

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charitable operation was about to be performed on him by an extra-official warrant from the poet-laureate.)

‘Pray, H——, have you seen Macready’s Zanga?’

‘Yes.’

‘And what do you think of it?’

‘I did not like it much.’

‘Nor I.—Macready has talents and a magnificent voice, but he is, I fear, too improving an actor to be a man of genius. That little ill-looking vagabond Kean never improved in any thing. In some things he could not, and in others he would not. The only parts of M.’s Zanga that I liked (which of course I only half-liked) were some things in imitation of the *extremely natural manner* of Kean, and his address to Alonzo, urging him, as the greatest triumph of his self-denial, to sacrifice

“A wife, a bride, a mistress unenjoyed—”

where his voice rose exulting on the sentiment, like the thunder that clothes the neck of the war-horse. The person that pleased me most in this play was Mrs. Sterling: she did justice to her part—a thing not easy to do. I like Macready’s Wallace better than his Zanga, though the play is not a good one, and it is difficult for the actor to find out the author’s meaning. I would not judge harshly of a first attempt, but the faults of youthful genius are exuberance, and a continual desire of novelty: now the faults of this play are tameness, common-place, and clap-traps. It is said to be written by young Walker, the son of the Westminster orator. If so, his friend, Mr. Cobbett, will probably write a Theatrical Examiner of it in his next week’s *Political Register*. What, I would ask, can be worse, more out of character and costume, than to make Wallace drop his sword to have his throat cut by Menteith, merely because the latter has proved himself (what he suspected) a traitor and a villain, and then console himself for this voluntary martyrdom by a sentimental farewell to the rocks and mountains of his native country! This effeminate softness and wretched cant did not belong to the age, the country, or the hero. In this scene, however, Mr. Macready shone much; and in the attitude in which he stood after letting his sword fall, he displayed extreme grace and feeling. It was as if he had let his best friend, his trusty sword, drop like a serpent from his hand. Macready’s figure is awkward, but his attitudes are graceful and well composed.—Don’t you think so?’—

I answered, yes; and he then ran on in his usual manner, by inquiring into the metaphysical distinction between the grace of form, and the grace that arises from motion (as for instance, you may move

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

a square form in a circular or waving line), and illustrated this subtle observation at great length and with much happiness. He asked me how it was, that Mr. Farren in the farce of the Deaf Lover, played the old gentleman so well, and failed so entirely in the young gallant. I said I could not tell. He then tried at a solution himself, in which I could not follow him so as to give the precise point of his argument. He afterwards defined to me, and those about us, the merits of Mr. Cooper and Mr. Wallack, classing the first as a respectable, and the last as a second-rate actor; with large grounds and learned definitions of his meaning on both points; and, as the lights were by this time nearly out, and the audience (except his immediate auditors) going away, he reluctantly 'ended.'

'But in Adam's ear so pleasing left his voice,'

that I quite forgot I had to write my article on the Drama the next day; nor without his imaginary aid should I have been able to wind up my accounts for the year, as Mr. Matthews gets through his *AT HOME* by the help of a little awkward ventriloquism.

## ACTORS AND THE PUBLIC

*The Examiner.*

*March 16, 1828.*

WE once happened to be present, and indeed to assist in the following conversation between a young lady and an elderly gentleman pretty much of our own standing in such matters. 'I believe, papa, grand-papa did not think so highly of Mr. Garrick as most people did?' 'Why, my dear, your grand-papa was not one of those who liked to differ very openly with the world; but he had an opinion of his own, which he imparted only to a few particular friends. He really thought Mr. Garrick was a quack, a better sort of Barthelemy-fair actor. He used to say (for he was a man that knew the world) "that the real secret of Mr. Garrick's success was, that his friend Bate Dudley had puffed him into notice, as he afterwards did the Prince of Wales."' We on this observed, in our individual capacity, that at least the dispenser of popularity had been more successful in the one case than in the other. 'I believe, papa, you yourself were never a great admirer of Mrs. Siddons?' 'Why no, my dear, one does not like to say those things, but she always appeared to me one of the great impositions on the world. There was nothing in her, a mere tragedy-queen.'—'Pray, ma'am, have you read Sir Walter's last novel?'—'Why no, I really cannot say I have. I have tried to get through one or two, but I find them so dry I have

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given up the attempt. I like "Sayings and Doings" much better. Pray, sir, can you tell me the name of the author?' 'Mr. Theodore Hook.'—'Bless me, what a pretty name; I wish papa would invite him to dinner.'—Here we have the genealogy of modern taste. 'Fore gad, they were all in a story—three generations in succession thinking nothing of Garrick, Mrs. Siddons, and the author of 'Waverley,' and preferring Mr. Theodore Hook before the quintessence of truth and nature. And such is the opinion of nine-tenths of the world, if we could get at their real thoughts. The vulgar in their inmost souls admire nothing but the vulgar; the common-place admire nothing but the common-place; the superficial nothing but the superficial. How should it be otherwise? The rest is cant and affectation: and as to those who know better and have pretensions themselves, they are actuated by envy and malice, or some preconceived theory of their own. Instead of a great actor, for instance, they are looking for a hat and feather, are disappointed at not finding what they fondly expect, and more disappointed still at coming in collision with a power that shocks all their previous sympathies, rules, and definitions. Let a great man 'fall into misfortune' (like Captain Macheath) and then you discover the real dispositions of the reading, seeing, believing, loving public towards their pretended idol. See how they set upon him the moment he is down, how they watch for the smallest slip, the first pretext to pick a quarrel with him, how slow they are to acknowledge worth, how they never forgive an error, how they trample upon and tear 'to tatters, to very rags,' the common frailties, how they overlook and malign the transcendent excellence which they can neither reach nor find a substitute for! Who has praised Sir Walter, who has not had a *fling* at him, since he lost all that he was worth? Oh! if he would but write the 'Life of George iv.!' Who that had felt Kean's immeasurable superiority in Othello, was not glad to see him brought to the ordinary level in a vulgar *crim. con.*? No: a man of true genius and common observation, instead of being disappointed at not carrying the prize by acclamation, and exciting gratitude equal to the pleasure he gives, ought to be thankful that he is not hooted from the stage, and torn in pieces by the rabble, as soon as he quits his lair of solitary obscurity. Every man of that sort is assuredly looked upon by the vulgar as having dealings with the devil, because they do not see 'the spells, the mighty magic he hath used,' and they would make an *auto-da-fé* of him if they durst, as they formerly burnt a witch! They contrive to torture him enough, as it is. What was it made men burn astrologers and alchemists in former times, but the sense of power and knowledge which the illiterate hind did not possess? Are the

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*reading* different from the *unreading* public? Believe it not. But this power was supposed to be exercised for evil purposes, whereas genius has a beneficial influence. *That* doubles the obligation, and fixes the ingratitude. The critical public view the appearance of an original mind with the sidelong glances and the *doux yeux* with which the animals at Exeter-'Change regard the strange visitants; but if any one trusting to the amiable looks and playful gambols of the one or the other opens the door of his own folly to let them out, he will soon see how it will fare with him. There are a million of people in this single metropolis, each of whom would willingly stand on the pedestal which you occupy. Will they forgive you for thrusting them from their place, or not triumph if they see you totter? Beware how you climb the slippery ascent; do not neglect your footing when you are there. Such is the natural feeling; and then comes the philosophical critic, and tells you with a face of lead and brass that 'no more indulgence is to be shewn to the indiscretions of a man of genius than to any other!' What! you make him drunk and mad with applause and then blame him for not being sober, you lift him to a pinnacle, and then say he is not to be giddy, you own he is to be a creature of impulse, and yet you would regulate him like a machine, you expect him to be all fire and air, to wing the empyrean, and to take you with him, and yet you would have him a muck-worm crawling the earth! But it is a Scotch critic who says this—let us pass on. If an actor is indeed six feet high, with a face like a paste-board mask, he may pass in the crowd and will have the mob on his side; but if he can only boast

'The fiery soul, that working out its way,  
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,  
And o'er informed the tenement of clay'—

he stands in equal peril of the unthinking many, and the fastidious few. Or, if an actress is a foreigner, she may escape 'the envy of less happier lands,' and be encouraged as a luxury for the great—be wafted to us on a name, and take back with her our sighs and tears. Yet how frail is the tenure of fashion! Where is Madame Catalani now? Where does the siren's voice flutter in the sunshine of her smiles?—

It was some time since we had seen Mr. Kean's Shylock. Fourteen years ago we were desired to go and see a young actor from the country attempt the part at Drury-lane; and, as was expected, add another to the list of failures. When we got there, there were about fifty people in the pit, and there was that sense of previous damnation which a thin house inspires. When the new candidate came on,

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there was a lightness in his step, an airy buoyancy and self-possession different from the sullen, dogged, *gaol-delivery* look of the traditional Shylocks of the stage. A vague expectation was excited, and all went on well; but it was not till he came to the part, when leaning on his staff, he tells the tale of Jacob and his flock with the garrulous ease of old age and an animation of spirit, that seems borne back to the olden time, and to the privileged example in which he exults, that it was plain that a man of genius had lighted on the stage. To those who had the spirit and candour to hail the lucky omen, the recollection of that moment of startling, yet welcome surprise, will always be a proud and satisfactory one. We wished to see after a lapse of time and other changes, whether this first impression would still keep 'true touch,' and we find no difference. Besides the excellence of the impassioned parts of Mr. Kean's acting, there is a flexibility and indefiniteness of outline about it, like a figure with a landscape back-ground—he is in Venice with his money-bags, his daughter and his injuries, but his thoughts take wing to the East, his voice swells and deepens at the mention of his sacred tribe and ancient law, and he dwells delighted on any digression to distant times and places, as a relief to his vindictive and rooted purposes. Of all Mr. Kean's performances, we think this the most faultless and least *mannered*, always excepting his Othello, which is equally perfect and twenty times more powerful. Mr. Kean succeeded so well in this part in which he came out, that with the diffidence of the abilities of others so natural to us, it was concluded by the managers he could do nothing else, and he was kept in it so long that he had nearly failed in Richard, till the dying scene bore down all opposition by a withering spell, and as if a preternatural being had visibly taken possession of his form, and made the enthusiasm the greater from the uncertainty that had before prevailed. The Sir Giles Overreach stamped him with the players and the town, and Othello with the critics. He who has done a single thing that others never forget, and feel ennobled whenever they think of, need not regret his having been, and may throw aside this fleshly coil, like any other worn-out part, grateful and contented!

## FRENCH PLAYS

*The Examiner.*

March 23, 1828.

MONSIEUR PERLET is certainly a pearl of an actor. He does every part well, and every part varied from another. He is, however, a jewel set in lead: the rest of the company to which he belongs are

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but indifferent. He is exactly what a London *star*, engaged for a few nights to gratify the 'upturned eyes of wondering audiences,' is in a tattered troop of country-actors. Those who fancy that they see here a thorough sample of French acting, the *elite* of the capital of civilised society, are mistaken; and we perhaps should not undeceive them, but that we can assure them that they have a pleasure to come, something to look forward to, and something to look back upon, and which (we believe) can be found only at Paris. Oh! Paris, thou hast the Louvre, the garden of the Thuilleries, and the *Théâtre Français*; Madame Pasta we share by turns with you, as the sun sheds its light on either world—the rest is barbarous and common. A friend of ours once received a letter from a friend of his, dated ROME, with three marks of admiration after it, which he answered by writing LONDON, with four marks of admiration after it: 'and why shouldn't he, since we had St. Paul's, the Cartoons, the Elgin Marbles, and the Bridges?' As to the three first, they were not ours; and as to the fourth, the reasoning puts me a little in mind of Sir William Curtis's, who remarked that 'it was very good of God, that wherever there was a great city, he had made a river by the side of it!' There was another proud distinction, which our patriotic friend did not enumerate, though it was a thumping make-weight in the scale, and might have claimed a fifth mark of admiration, which was, that he himself was there. This is the triumphant argument in every Englishman's imagination,—wherever he is, is the centre of gravity; whatever he calls his own, is the standard of excellence. It is our desire to shake off this feeling as much as possible that makes us frequent the theatre at the English Opera-house, and try (all we can) to 'leave our country and ourselves' at the door. Why in truth should an English Nobleman be convinced in himself and speak upon that conviction in his place in Parliament, that because he keeps a French cook, the French have no genius for anything but cookery? Or why, my dear Madam, should you have taken it in your head, that because you wear a French bonnet, there is nothing in Paris but milliners' girls who are no better than they should be? Nay, that is what you really imagine, however you may deny it—but be assured, good, gentle, honest, reflecting reader of either sex, who feel your own existence so solid that every thing else is a fable to it, or your own virtue so clear that everything else is a spot to it, that there are things out of England besides what are imported into it—that French women not only make caps and bonnets, but wear them with a peculiar grace; that they have eyes glancing from under them full of fire and discretion; that they do not make a false step at every turn, though they do not walk like Englishwomen, that is, as if their limbs

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were an incumbrance to them ; that the Chamber of Deputies think your Lordship's speeches dry and tasteless, for want of a little French seasoning ; that there are cities not built of bricks, faces not made of dough, a language that has a meaning though it is not ours, and virtue that is neither a statue nor a mask ! For instance, we think good-manners is one part of ethics, and we do wish *en passant* that our fine gentlemen at the play would not loll on their seats, whistle, and thrust their sticks nearly in your face to show their superiority to the vulgar ; and that those of the other sex, who are admitted on their good behaviour could be prevailed on not to talk and laugh so loud, not to nod or wink, not to slap their acquaintance on the back, or shut the doors with such violence after them, to attract admirers and shew an independent spirit. Strange that the English notion of independence consists in giving offence to and displaying your contempt for others ! They order these things better in France, where they consult decency of appearance at least, and Venus is a prude in public—not a hoyden or a bully !

‘ Our Cupid is a blackguard boy,  
That thrusts his link in every face.’

This brings us back to the French Theatre. As we do not approve every thing foreign or French, we are more bound to acknowledge and do justice to what we do like. *Imprimis*, we abhor French pictures. In the second place, we tolerate French tragedy. Thirdly, we adore French comedy. The characteristic of this in its best state, and as compared with our utmost efforts in the same line, is, that it is equally perfect throughout ; and as that great philosopher of idleness (Mr. Coleridge) once wisely and wittily observed, ‘ there is something in the idea of perfection exceedingly satisfactory to the mind of man.’ It is not as with us at present (it was not always so—or is it the haze of time, the tints of youth that made the difference ?) where the most we can expect is one or two actors of disproportioned excellence, and all the others merely to fill the stage ; but there all are in their place, and all are first-rate. Oh ! it is a fine thing to see one of Molière's comedies acted (as they should be) at the *Théâtre Français*, with the sense of every pregnant line fully understood and developed, with the passion and character delineated to the life, every situation painted, and every shade and difference of absurdity hit off and realised ; and not only this, but the whole so managed, with such studious attention to the public and respect to the art, that not the least bit of costume is out of place, and (what is more important) that every part is filled by an actor or actress not only who comprehends and enters into the spirit of it, but who seems

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

made for it in person, gesture and features, as if they had been cast in a dramatic mould, or kept in a glass-case for that purpose from the first representation to the present day. Thus the long, nasal speeches are delivered by an actor with the prominent, paste-board nose and arched eye-brows of the Oratory, and whose unusual height and shambling figure serve him as it were for a rostrum; the poetical dedicator in the *Misanthrope* has sparkling eyes and teeth, smiling delighted on his patron and himself; the confidante of *Celimene*, in the same piece, is slender, fragile, timid in appearance, a contrast to the firm precision and maturer *en bon point* of *Mademoiselle Mars*; *Orgon* has a little, round, dimpled, credulous face, and easy contented corpulence; the *Tartuffe* has the sneaking sanctity of a monk and the grin of a monkey. Thus you have not only the poet's verse exactly expressed and recited; but you have, in addition, the natural history of the part, the drapery, the grouping. The age of *Louis xiv.* revives again in all its masqued splendour; the folding-doors are thrown open, and you see men and women playing the fool deliciously, 'new manners and the pomp of elder days,' court-airs, court-dresses, the strut, the shrug, the bow, the curtsy, the paint, the powder, the patches, the perfume, the laced ruffles, the diamond buckle, the hoop-petticoat. Happy time! Envious time to think of! When vanity and folly expanded in full bloom, and were spread out ostentatiously like the figures in a gaudy tapestry, instead of being folded up and thrust into a corner by the hand of a cynic and austere philosophy; when personal appearance and amorous intrigue were all in all; when a marquis stalked the God of his own idolatry, and *Madame la Marquise* was held for something divine by *Monsieur Jourdain*; when the whole creation was supposed to be concentrated in the fantastic circle of lords and ladies, and the universal, the abstract, and the critical were held in the utter contempt which they deserve—and which they receive at the hands both of the ignorant and the adept! Nothing that we know of is a specific for conjuring up this shadow of the past, and making you (if you are in the mood) feel like a great booby school-boy, with a large *bouquet* at your breast, or an antiquated fop with a bag-wig and sword—but sitting at the *Théâtre Français* with *Mademoiselle Mars* and the whole *corps dramatique* drawn up on the stage. Then you have the very thing before you: it glitters in your eyes; it tingles in your ears, it sinks into the heart, and makes warm tears roll down the cheek of those, who have ever felt either what the present or the past is! It is said to be an ill wind that blows nobody good; and probably we owe it to the very exclusion of French players from general society, and their being compelled in self-defence to devote themselves wholly to

## THE EXAMINER

their profession, that they keep up this sort of traditional copy of the manners, peculiarities, and tone of another age, 'unmixed with baser matter.' We could wish that a certain happy-spirited writer (who first gave the true *pine-apple* flavour to theatrical criticism, making it a pleasant mixture of sharp and sweet) would resume the subject of the age of Charles II. (our nearest approach to that of Louis XIV.) and as he has shocked the upstart petulance of some of his contemporaries, restore in his inimitable careless manner the wit and graces of a former period.

We expected to have seen Monsieur Perlet on Thursday evening in the Bourgeois Gentilhomme; and to make sure of the ground, had read three acts in the morning with great care and an anticipated relish of the acting. We were therefore disappointed; and the reader must accept of a rhapsody in lieu of a criticism. We think it bad policy to have many new pieces; for the English part of the audience in general require to peruse the text beforehand in order to follow the performance. We like to know exactly what we are about; and it is both a pride and a pleasure to have an excuse for rubbing up our acquaintance with an old and esteemed author. The universality of the French language is not an unalloyed advantage to them: it saves the trouble of learning any other, but the necessity of acquiring a new language is like the necessity of acquiring a new sense. It is an increase of knowledge and liberality. We are proud of understanding their authors. Why do they despise ours? Because they are ignorant of them. If they had known what 'stuff' we are made of, very likely we should not have beaten them. M. Perlet played the part of a strolling comedian in the new piece of the Landau, and eats and drinks in an admirable *bravura* style at a gentleman's house on the road, where he passes himself off as a great man, and with that lively absorption in the present enjoyment and disregard of the consequences of his imposture, which are, we suspect, national traits. In the *Landes* which followed, he was equally happy in a poor, frightened servant, and expressed the surprises of fear and the tricks and disjointed pantomime antics, to which it resorted to screen itself, with admirable quaintness and drollery. The swagger and self-possession of the one character was totally opposed to the imbecility and helplessness of the other. Madame Falcoz made her first appearance in the *Tyran Domestique* as Madame Valmont. She is an elegant woman and an interesting actress, though with too much appearance of *still-life*. This is not the case with Madame Daudel. She has all the vivacity and bustle of a chamber-maid. She ought always to come in with a broom in her hand; or rather, it is quite unnecessary.

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

### FRENCH PLAYS—CONTINUED

*The Examiner.*

March 30, 1828.

WE exhausted that subject last week, and were complimented upon it, which we took ill. Probably advisable to be ill this week, to let our absence be felt, or to make up with scraps and quotation. To transcribe four different accounts of the *Tartuffe*, Sir Walter Scott's, Mr. Leigh Hunt's, Monsieur Perlet's, and one of our own, and to make it understood that the last is the best. To remark that Monsieur Perlet, 'that soul of pleasure and that life of whim,' is a provoking actor—for there is no fault to be found with him, and to give the reader an idea of his peculiar excellence is next to impossible. Whatever he does, his ease, self-possession, and spirit are the same. To make it a rule not to tell any one who asks me the plot of the *Ecole des Maris*, but to tell it myself. Borrowers of plots are like borrowers of snuff:—every one his own *box-keeper*. (*Ha, ha, ha!*) The laugh here comes from a friend of ours to whom we read this, and who kept repeating the whole evening—'Every man his own box-keeper.' (*Ha, ha, ha!*) Very well indeed. Sganarelle and Ariste are two brothers, both of them in years, who have two wards, Isabelle and Leonore, whom they propose to marry. Sganarelle is an old blockhead, who brings up his intended bride with the greatest severity, and will let her see no plays, go to no balls, receive no visits, lest it should corrupt her manners or divert her affection from him. He is very angry at his brother Ariste, who gives full liberty to his mistress Leonore, and contends that bars, bolts, female Arguses, and ill-humour are not the way to make women in love with virtue, or to prevent their inclination from wandering. Sganarelle laughs at him, but he turns out a true prophet. Isabelle, not thinking the *disagreeable* the most *agreeable* thing in the world, meets with a lover (Valere) more to her mind than her guardian. And here begins the interest of the plot. Having no other mode of communication, she sends Sganarelle to him, to let him know that she is apprized of the state of his affections, and to beg him not to persecute her with his amorous thoughts, if he has any regard for her honour or peace of mind. He understands the hint, and sends the supposed husband away, delighted with his confusion and repulse, who has no sooner returned to his intended, than she desires him to go back with a letter, which Ariste has just had the assurance to send her in his absence, full of his absurd passion. This Sganarelle consents to do, but proposes to open the letter first, which she will not allow him to do, saying it would betray curiosity to break the seal, and no woman of virtue should feel even a wish to know the

## THE EXAMINER

improper sentiments entertained towards her. Her guardian delivers the letter with an air of triumph and pity for his rival, which Valere reads, and finds it a frank and passionate declaration of Isabelle's attachment to him. Not satisfied with this, she informs Sganarelle that he has a design to carry her off by force, who goes to reproach him with the baseness of his conduct and the pretended terror and uneasiness of his ward. Valere affirming that Sganarelle has no authority to bring him these disdainful messages from the lady, Sganarelle brings them together in his presence, when an admirable scene of *double entendre* follows: Isabelle declaring that she sees two objects before her, one which she adores, the other which she abhors, Sganarelle taking to himself the preference which is intended for Valere, and the latter rapturously kissing her hand behind his back, while her guardian affectionately embraces her. But in recompense for her fondness, he proposes to marry her the next day instead of at the end of eight days; and this driving Isabelle to despair, she takes the resolution to quit the house in the middle of the night, but is met by her guardian, who asking the meaning of this nocturnal expedition, she tells him that her sister has come to her house, violently in love with Valere, whom she is going in search of, to console her; but Sganarelle not being satisfied with this assignation, will not allow her to remain, and presently after turns his own bride out of doors, thinking it to be his brother's ward Leonore, and goes with great glee to inform Ariste of the adventure, and to lecture him on the difference of their schemes of female education. In the meantime Leonore comes in from a ball, is scandalized at the story that she hears told of her; and the Notary that Sganarelle had sent for to witness her elopement and the treachery of Valere, having married him to Isabelle, she comes out from his house, and explains the whole mystery to the delight of every one but Sganarelle—The plot is charming, and the style is profuse of sense and wit; but there is this remark to be made here, as on other of Molière's plays, that however elegant, ingenious, or natural, the scene must be laid in France, that the whole passes under that empire of words, which is confined to her airy limits, and that there is a credulous and unqualified assent to verbal professions necessary to carry on the plot, which can be found nowhere but in France. This comedy was correctly but somewhat faintly represented. Mademoiselle Falcoz, who played Isabelle, was dressed as we have an idea servants were formerly dressed, with a full handkerchief and a black silk apron. Perhaps it was the costume of young ladies at that period; but we suspect that this is carrying literal correctness too far, where it shocks instead of assisting the imagination, and instructing us at the expense of our amusement,

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

which is against the law of dramatic propriety. If the play was not done quite as it might be, it received a brilliant comment from the looks of some of the audience; and as the stage is a mirror to nature, so these are a mirror to the stage itself. Bright eyes! Laughing lips! Tell-tale eyebrows! spare us or we retire incontinently from the French play,—‘To the woods, to the waves, to the winds we’ll complain’ of your inexorable cruelty and endless persecution!

### THE THEATRES AND PASSION-WEEK

*The Examiner.*

*April 6, 1828.*

THIS being *Passion-week* there was no play. ‘Because thou art virtuous, shall we not have cakes and ale?’ In truth, however, we have no objection to this alternation of festivity and mourning: it mimics the order of the natural world. We require a truce with pleasure as well as pain, to enable us to endure the one or to enjoy the other; and we must put a stop at some period or other to the whirl of dissipation, unless we would grow quite stupid or giddy. One week out of the fifty-two, in which the theatres shut their doors in your face, in which the play-bills do not flaunt on either side of the way, and you are not followed through the streets while the letter-bell is ringing in your ears, with the importunate repetition of ‘A Bill for Covent Garden or Drury Lane,’ is not amiss or out of reason; and the cry of ‘Hot-cross buns’ fills up the vacancy, and dallies with the interval of suspense not disagreeably. There is a large class of persons who only go to the play during Easter: it is hard if we cannot stay away from it during *Passion-week*. Our expectations and satisfaction are enhanced by the short restraint put upon them, and outward prevarication with our scruples. Without a little spice of hypocrisy or gravity the world would lose its savour: and by the periodical mark of reprobation thus set upon it, the play becomes a sort of pleasant sin all the rest of the year. As for the holiday-folks, *Passion-week* is to them a kind of bleak desert, beyond which they behold the land of promise,—a *ba-ba*, or line of circumvallation round the enchanted castle of Pleasure, over which they rush to storm the citadel with double eagerness and obstreperous glee, escaping from the formal gloom of Ash-Wednesday and Good-Friday, into the bright radiance of Easter-Sunday, as from the grave to a bridal, and ‘seizing their pleasures

‘With rough strife,  
Thorough the iron gates of life.’

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We do not think the flutter of hope, the sparkle of joy, in the young or old adventurers, on these occasions of mirth and licence, would be complete, were it not for the sense of general restraint and privation which precedes them, and makes the release from the dead pause, the involuntary self-denial of the past week, a more precious achievement to all parties concerned. At least, this inference is pretty plainly discernible in the smiling looks and uneasy delight of the truant visitors in the boxes, and the noise and uproar of the overflowing galleries. To those who object to the disorderly interruptions of the latter, and consider the being present at an Easter-play as vulgar on that account, it may be proper to observe that there is no part of an audience so quiet and attentive as the galleries after the curtain once draws up, if it is not the fault of the actors or the author, who do not make themselves heard or understood so far; and again, we conceive it might be of service to dramatic writers sometimes to hazard their persons or compromise their dignity in the gallery, to see what impression their scenes make on hearts fresh from nature's mint, instead of stationing themselves in the dress-boxes, to overhear polite whispers, or moulding their features in the glass of newspaper criticism the next day. The tears shed in silence by these untutored spectators, the breath held in, the convulsive sob, the eager gaze, the glance of delight, would afford better hints and lessons how to revive the spirit and the pathos of the primitive stage, than any instructions derived from drivelling Jerdan or from ranting Croly—nay, than from our own columns, the only ones, as modest Mr. Blackwood would say, worthy of the least attention in such matters. As to the players themselves, we do not know how Passion-week sits upon them. One would think it would be welcome to them as a break in the routine of business, as a pause in the wear-and-tear of life: but there is no saying. For they are so 'stretched upon the rack of ecstasy,' that almost any respite from it may be scarcely endurable. The public eye, the public voice, becomes a part of a man's self, which he can hardly do without, even for an instant. The player out of his part is like the dram-drinker without his dram, the snuff-taker without his box. What organ is so sensitive as that of vanity? What thirst so insatiable, so incessant, as that of praise? The meagre days of Lent, one would argue previously, would be 'gaudy-days' to his Majesty's servants, the drudges of public recreation,—snatched from the town, and given to retirement and oblivion,—brief interval to allay the feverish irritation of popular applause, to soothe the smart of mortification and disappointment. But no! the successful candidate thinks every moment lost in which he is robbed of the meed of admiration; the unsuccessful is impatient

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to retrieve some error, to convince the public of theirs :—the hopeless performer thinks it better to be hissed than not noticed at all. Even the scene-shifters and candle-snuffers (to talk in the old style) fancy themselves, in a full house and busy night, persons of importance ; and when left to themselves, must feel like fish out of water :—nothing else but the want of the customary excitement could probably enable actors to repeat their parts night after night : they stagger through them like drunken men. Many of the most fortunate seem uneasy, listless, and dissatisfied, when off the stage, because they do not see a thousand faces beaming with delight, because they do not hear at every step the shouts of Gods and men. Why do they not resort to Bartholomew-fair, where they may act every half-hour during the day, and not get a wink of sleep at night for the noise of cymbals and rattles ? This is as if a man could never be easy unless he saw his person reflected in a thousand mirrors, or heard every word he utters repeated by a hundred echoes. Contempt, poverty, pain, want, and ‘ all the natural ills that flesh is heir to,’ are preferable to this attainment of all that can be desired, and the craving after more. The lady in *Love’s Labour Lost* condemns her lover Biron, for his excess of levity, ‘ to jest a twelvemonth in an hospital.’ For ourselves, we would impose it as a useful penance on those who are spoiled by the admiration of friends, to take the stage to the *Land’s End*, and return by themselves, so as to breathe for a few days out of the atmosphere of habitual adulation ; and as to actors (who are anything more than *walking gentlemen*) we think they should be bound over never to sing a song, or tell a story in private. Their theatrical pulse is already at a hundred, without shining in company. Those who have nothing to say but ‘ what is set down for them,’ stand the best chance for repose and moderation, and are also likely to make the best actors. An actor has not to study his own part, but somebody else’s, as a painter should not be taken up with himself, but his sitters.

The account of the death of the late Mr. Conway, the actor, came this week—a week of dole. It was melancholy enough, and must have occasioned regret to some who had at any time commented freely on his acting. Yet the original cause of it was not his fault, nor that of the critics—but rather of those who pushed him forward to run the gauntlet of public opinion, and attract a little momentary wonder and curiosity, without his being prepared to stand the trial, or meet the consequences. Popular favourites are too much like the innocent victims of superstition, led out, garlanded with flowers, to slaughter and to sacrifice. This was, we think, the case with Mr. Conway. He was a man of fine personal appearance, of modesty,

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and merit; but his more than usual height, and the disproportion between the shewiness of his figure and his genius for the drama (though he was by no means devoid of passion or talent) which at first made crowds of idle people run to look at and applaud him, afterwards subjected him to unavoidable, though in one sense (and such he felt it) unjust satire. It cannot be denied that he played Jaffier, for instance, with considerable force and feeling; and had he been of the ordinary stature (which is as necessary on the stage as in a group of statuary) he would have been highly respectable in that and other parts requiring a certain mixture of tenderness and vehemence. As it was, those who had at first extolled him to the skies, now swelled the cry against him; and the honey of adulation was naturally turned into gall and bitterness. Young, enthusiastic, and sincere, he attributed to malice and rooted enmity what was owing to accident, and the caprice and levity of the world, who keep up the sense of self-importance and excitement, by loading their thoughtless favourite with caresses one moment, and treating him with every mark of obloquy the next. Poor Conway was not prepared for this; he thought their admiration of him lasting and invaluable, their desertion wounded him to the quick. He did not know that the town was a hardened jilt, whose fondness or aversion are equally suspicious. He retired from the conflict, but bore with him the sense of ill-treatment which he had not knowingly merited, of disappointed hopes, which only the waters of oblivion could wash out, and which should deter others from encountering the same risk, who are not sure of the victory, or are not armed with fortitude equally proof against the homage or insults of mankind. Mr. Conway in his manners was mild and unaffected, spirited in his conduct, and if not a scholar, was distinguished by a love for reading and study.

CHARLES KEAN

*The Examiner.*

April 13, 1828.

WE went on Monday to see young Mr. Kean in *Lover's Vows*, with the intention of expressing an opinion; but we have nothing to add in the way of criticism to what we have already said. We will however in so delicate a matter venture on two general remarks for our own satisfaction, and we should hope for that of others. The first is, it appears to us clear that Mr. Kean, *jun.*, will never make so great an actor as his father; and if not, he had better rest contented with his father's fame. The Marquis of Douro does not, we daresay, think of fighting the battle of Waterloo over again: why then should the son of Mr. Kean wish to lay up any hard-

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earned and doubtful theatrical laurels of his own? The crammed pit of Covent-Garden is his Mount St. Jean: the third act of Othello should be his escutcheon and his hereditary coat-of-arms. A pettifogging, cringing lawyer, a leader of a gang of ruffians, is made a lord, and ennobles a race of ciphers: if this is right, then why should not a man of genius reflect some of his glory on those next to him, and leave the dower of his great name to his immediate posterity? Because the gratitude of the public is insincere, and nobility a mere state-trick. It is not sentiment, but servility, that inclines us to pay respect to a long line of nobles or of princes. Take from the Marquis of Douro his estate of Strathfieldsay, and in a few years he might be in the King's Bench, and the *Times* newspaper would not subscribe five pounds to help him out. If Mr. Kean had left a hundred thousand pounds behind him, his son might have sat for a close borough, or have made a 'vulgar' Minister of State. We *do* think there should be some distinctive mark, some ribbon of a Legion of Honour, with the smallest possible reversion of independence, some Tyburn ticket of merit, reserved for the sons of the Muses and the bastards of fortune, to exempt them alike from starving and the office of serving the public (which is much the same thing) for three generations. People talk of birth as necessary to honour and to power: did not the popes, the sons of peasants or of nobody, set their feet upon the necks of monarchs? People talk of the upstart pretensions of authors and men of intellect in modern times: did not the priests (the learned men of their day) come in as the first estate between heaven and the nobles? Why then taunt the flame of genius with being earth-born? It is the dotage of a prejudice to do so. We repeat, the sons of celebrated men are hardly off: the example of their parents (together with necessity) urges them to do something: that very example, from being too near, and almost seeming to save them the trouble of exertion, precludes the possibility of success. Even where the genius might be the same, the imitation and also the habitual idea of doing something extraordinary without knowing what, is prejudicial, if not fatal; and if they wish to turn out anything, they should strike into a path the opposite of what is always before them. Young Kean perhaps would shine as a University-wrangler, or a conveyancer under the bar; and the son of a philosopher should go to court! Again, Mr. Kean is said by his friends to be a promising young actor. We have nothing to say to that; but we will tell him one thing, there is no such person as a promising actor. It is here, as in all similar pursuits, performance or nothing. We do not say no great actor improves, but no actor becomes great by improvement. The sun is seen as soon as it appears above

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the horizon : there is the same glory round its rising and its setting : so may it always be with the sun of genius, which is the lamp of the world ! Garrick fell as it were from the clouds : Mr. Kean's father rose at once from obscurity. The late Mr. Kemble was the only actor that we remember to have attained to the first rank by gradual advances ; and he was sustained in his progress by great stateliness of manner and advantages of person. In general, those who are always improving on themselves, are surpassed by others, and complain that, as they are about to seize the wreath of fame, it is snatched from them by some bolder and more fortunate hand. We do not presume to sit on Mr. Kean's *quantum meruit*—we will not—but if he is not likely to become a first-rate actor, his name forbids him to be aught less. If he knows our tone in speaking when we are serious or merely splenetic, he will know that these remarks are dictated by anything but a feeling hostile to him.

A new melo-dramatic entertainment succeeded, called *The Dumb Savoyard and his Monkey*. The story is in few words, as follows : The Count Maldecini having been condemned to die (we know not why—for these inventions plunge us at once *in medias res*) his wife accompanied by their little child appears suddenly on the stage with a pardon for him. The ferryman at Ober Wesel, however, refuses to carry her up the river, as the hour is too late ; and she is in despair, when the Savoyard, with the assistance of his monkey, undertakes to convey her to the place of destination. They arrive safely at the Falls of the Grenfells, near the salt-mine, in which her husband is confined, when they are attacked by a band of robbers who take a number of valuable ornaments from her, and among the rest the morocco-case, containing her husband's pardon ; but this, at her passionate and distracted entreaty, the chief restores in a fit of generosity, and with an appropriate speech for a German robber. Meantime, the monkey contrives to pick the pardon out of the case, and hide it in a crevice of the rock, on the top of which he sits grinning, the demon of mischief and meddlesomeness. When the Countess arrives at the prison, she accordingly misses what she had built all her hopes upon, but she deceives the jailor and escapes with her husband, also by the aid of the Savoyard and the dextrous Marmozette. They are pursued and overtaken just at the very spot where the precious document had been lost ; and as the Count is about to be shot, in conformity to his sentence, which he reads and very sentimentally and loyally approves, the monkey betrays the hiding-place of the pardon, which the frantic Countess eagerly rescues from his grasp, and the whole ends happily. Mrs. W. West played the heroine, and looked forlorn and interesting. Mrs. Barrymore

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was Pipino, the Dumb Savoyard, and made a very pretty boy. As to the nimble Marmozette (Master Wieland), if it depended on us, we would make him skip. Our old acquaintance Jocko has left a numerous progeny behind him, and we are afraid we shall never see the end of the breed. Why, in the midst of the beautiful and enchanting scenery on the banks of the Rhine (so admirably represented in this piece) must we have an artificial monster staring us in the face like an ugly looking-glass the whole time. We have no patience on this point. We never could bear to see that branch of the species on or off the stage, and would shoot them like the man in *Candide*, even at a risk of similar consequences. We have no need of a menagerie in a play-house; the money taken at the door on such occasions should be a deodand to the proprietors of Exeter-Change. We wish the *Times*, in its gravity, would take up the subject, and with its leaden mace drive these *lusus naturæ* and nauseous *double-entendres* from the scene.—We did not recover our equanimity till Miss Foote, as Meggy Macgilpin, and her pretty Highland dress, put us into good humour; and O'Keefe's song of Twang twang darillo, between Gatty and Russell, scattered every particle of bile in a roar of laughter.

### Covent Garden.

THE holiday attraction of the week has been a melo-drama called Tuckitomba, said to be founded on a fact which happened in Jamaica fifty years ago. The interest turns on a black sorceress who steals her master's child out of revenge, on an old pirate (Tuckitomba) who runs away with a mulatto-girl for love, and on the blowing-up of the vessel in which they set sail for Africa, by the carelessness of a tailor on board (Blanchard) who sets fire to the powder-magazine with the contents of his tobacco-pipe. There was a great deal of bustle, and a want of interest in this piece. The prominent trait was the acting of Keeley, who is called 'for shortness' Goliah. This gentleman really answers to Falstaff's description of 'a man made after supper of a cheese-paring.' He is a shred of comedy; a pocket-Liston. He is great in little parts, and makes an amusing approach to a nonentity.—The Minor Theatres have each had their novelties during the week, and been tolerably successful. The critics are divided on the temper and behaviour of John Bull at this season. Some say he was lumpish and leaden at Drury-Lane on Monday, others, that he was in all his glory at Covent-Garden on the same evening. It is from seeing the confusion and uncertainty that prevail in the most authentic reports that we propose shortly to publish two *Examiners* a week, to set the town right in these and such-like particulars, and to

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save them the trouble of consulting the daily papers altogether. As to John's behaviour, pleased or sulky, drunk or sober, we never could see any difference in it. Where we were, a man stood up on a bench in the pit, and another insisting on his getting down, and on his refusal threatening to call him out the next day, the first made answer—'Aye, if your master will let you!'—'Master! what do you mean by that? I have no master: I come and go where I please!' The women now interfered, and one of them clapped her handkerchief to her husband's mouth to prevent further disagreeables. All an Englishman's ideas are modifications of his will; and it is strange that with all his boasted independence and equality, he thinks he has a right to insult every one who is not a better man than himself. The reason is, he has no respect for himself, nor consequently for others, except for some external advantage of wealth or situation; and his ill-humour can only be bribed to keep the peace by his self-interest. 'Vice to be hated needs but to be seen:'—we are sure that this at least may be said of ill-manners.

Turn we from them to the French play, where the object is to enjoy the scene, to be pleased with yourself, and not to insult your neighbours, or inquire which is master and which is man. There have been several *debûts*, all very creditable and successful, Monsieur Berteche, Madame Beaufre, and Mademoiselle Irma. We saw the former (who is of the Mademoiselle Mars school, and whose tongue runs faster than a race-horse) in the *Ecole des Veillards* with Monsieur Perlet, who plays the jealous husband with great point and spirit: but shall we add, that in the passionate parts, he does not *let out* enough, there is an interdicted and internal manner, a fidgetty and confined air, which is probably owing to the subordinate parts in which he usually acts. In this comedy, a gentleman pulls off his coat on the stage, which is with us an indecorum, except in farce. We mention this to show the difference of feeling in such matters. We missed Perlet in the *Cheats of Scapin*: he always contrives to *cheat* us of our favourite Molière. But we had a fall taste of him in the *Anglaises pour rire*. And these are our fair countrywomen—so they sit, speak, walk, sing, and dance, in the eyes of foreigners! No it is Monsieur Pelissie and Monsieur Perlet—but very like!

## SOME OF THE OLD ACTORS

*The Examiner.*

*April 27, 1828.*

THE last week or two has been rich in theatricals; Miss Stephens in *Love in a Village*, where the scene opens with those two young

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beauties sitting in a bower of roses like a flower stuck in the stomacher of beauty, and where that unconscious siren 'warbles her native wood-notes wild' with such simplicity and sweetness; Charles Kemble in the *Inconstant*, who in one glorious scene plays tragedy and comedy to the life, and in one short moment tastes the 'fierce extremes' of pleasure and agony, of life and death; and Othello, with bumpers and three times three; to say nothing of Madame Vestris in the *Invincibles*, and Mr. John Reeve in the immortal Major Sturgeon. Why then did we take no notice of them? Notice we have taken, but it has been with 'our mind's eye,' in 'our heart's core.' Ill will it fare with us, when we do not cast a sidelong glance at those pregnant abridgments, the play-bills, and when their flaunting contents, that unfold to us the map of our life, no longer excite a smile or a sigh. Any one who pleases may then write our epitaph, though it will not be worth writing. At such a season, for instance, we saw Mrs. Siddons in such a part for the first time; in such another, Kemble walked with regal air across the stage, and his stately brow needed no diadem to set it off; in such a character Bannister was in all his glory; in that, Suett vented his resistless folly; here, Munden went the whole length of his face; here, Lewis was all life and air; here, Jack Palmer was great indeed; here, King was bitter in *Touchstone*, and Miss Pope romantic in *Audrey*; then, Mrs. Goodall played the part of *Rosalind*, and tripped in becoming page's attire through the forest of *Ardennes* (days and years long past!); here, Dignum warbled as *Amiens* (before we had heard of the peace of *Amiens*); and here, Mrs. Jordan's laugh comes over the heart, and if it has grown dry and seared, fills it with the remembrance of joy and gladness once more. Dodd and Parsons hover in the extreme verge of the horizon, but gay shadows, airy shapes. Then such-a-one took leave of the stage, drawing a narrower circle within the natural circle of his being; then Liston appeared in the *Finger-Post*, looking like a finger-post, with his nose only pointing to fun; Elliston in *Wild Oats* (will he never sow 'em?); Matthews in the *Bee-Hive*, as busy as a bee; Miss Kelly in chambermaids; Miss O'Neill in heroines; last, not least, Mr. Kean, the 'bony prizier' of the stage, who has knocked all other reputations and his own on the head. What a host of names and recollections is here! How many more are omitted, names that have embodied famous poets' verse and been the 'fancy's midwife,' that have gladdened a nation and made life worth living for, that have made the world pass in review as a gaudy pageant, and set before us in a waking dream the bodily shapes and circumstances of all that is most precious in joy or in sorrow! And is it come to this, that the drama is accounted vulgar by the vulgar, and that we are to

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cut our old acquaintances the players, those who have thrown a light upon the morning, noon, and evening of our day, 'gay creatures of the element, that live 'i th' rainbow and play in the plighted clouds,' and who have taken us so many hundred times to sit and laugh with them, or shed 'tears such as angels weep,' at a height where we could look down at the sordid of the earth—and at a universe of Operas, with their naked *figurantes*, and sense and soul muffled up in sound to suit the callous taste or ranker gust of ears polite! We may have said all this before; and here lies the misfortune of our office. A theatrical audience is supposed to vary every night: the *reading public* is assumed to be always the same body. We could praise Mr. Charles Kemble's acting in Young Mirabel every time he does it, and are always glad to think he is going to play what does such credit to his art and gives such pleasure to others; but we can say nothing about it, having once expressed our opinion to that effect. An actor repeats a favourite part till farther notice; a singer may be *encored* in an air as often as his friends please; thank God, we have stock-pieces that never wear out: but who ever ventured upon reviving a defunct criticism? It might pass with the million, but some good-natured friend would betray us. The writer's secret would be found out, and he would be had up as an imposter. Nevertheless, having meditated a new criticism (or eulogy, for it is the same thing) on Mr. Kean's Othello, and the overflowing house having excluded us from the Free-List, we venture upon borrowing an old one; and if we were to try, we do not know that we could *mend our draught*.

'Mr. Kean's Othello is, we suppose, the finest piece of acting in the world. It is impossible either to describe or praise it adequately. We have never seen any actor so wrought upon—so "perplexed in the extreme." The energy of passion, as it expresses itself in action, is not the most terrific part: it is the agony of his soul, shewing itself in looks and tones of voice. In one part, where he listens in dumb despair to the fiend-like insinuations of Iago, he presented the very face, the marble aspect of Dante's Count Ugolino. On his fixed eyelids "horror sat plumed." In another part, where a gleam of hope or of tenderness returns to subdue the tumult of his passions, his voice broke in faltering accents from his overcharged breast. His lips might be said less to utter words than to distil drops of blood gushing from his heart. An instance of this was in his pronunciation of the line—

"Of one that loved not wisely, but too well."

The whole of this last speech was indeed given with exquisite force and beauty. We only object to the virulence with which he delivers

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the last line, and with which he stabs himself—a virulence which Othello would neither feel against himself at the moment, nor against the “turbaned Turk” (whom he had slain) at such a distance of time. His exclamation on seeing his wife, “I cannot think but Desdemona’s honest,” was the “glorious triumph of exceeding love,” a thought flashing conviction on his mind, and irradiating his countenance with joy, like sudden sunshine. In fact almost every scene or sentence in this extraordinary exhibition is a master-piece of natural passion. The convulsed motion of the hands, and the involuntary swelling of the veins in the forehead, in some of the most painful situations, should not only suggest topics of critical panegyric, but might furnish studies to the painter or sculptor.’

After Othello on Wednesday, The Mayor of Garratt followed ‘with kindest change.’ Mr. Reeve played Major Sturgeon, and Mr. Keeley, Jerry Sneak. Comparisons are odious: *therefore* they are made. Mr. Keeley’s Jerry was not so good as Russell’s formerly; nor Mr. Reeve’s Major Sturgeon equal to Dowton’s. This is saying nothing, for both those performances were of the very first water. Mr. Keeley’s person is diminutive, and he seems the natural butt of a virago: Russell was a goodly man of his inches; it was his spirit only that was hen-pecked, and that submitted to buffets and blows. Dowton again was the model of a train-band Captain in his own esteem, and never doubted of the ineffable superiority of his own pretensions: Reeve, in the midst of his insolence and vapouring, has a look of *quizzing* himself, and sees through the ridicule of his own character. He however throws much humour and fantastic absurdity into the part, *à-la-Liston*; but his drollery is conscious and knowing, not vacant and absolutely spontaneous, like that of his unrivalled prototype. At the end of the farce, there was some division of opinion whether the piece was not low, as if that which had mainly driven such manners and characters almost from the knowledge of the present generation was not a master-stroke of genius, and in fact an historical drama.

### THE COMPANY AT THE OPERA

*The Examiner.*

*Covent-Garden, May 4, 1828.*

THERE has been a new farce here (called, disagreeably enough, The Little Offsprings). If Mr. Peake is one of the most amusing of our farce writers, it is because he pretends to be nothing better. He professes to write a *farce*, not a *genteel* comedy; and he generally succeeds accordingly. Our complaint against his present novelty is

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that unlike most of his previous ones, it is not quite *broad* enough. He himself will smile at this objection, because assuredly it is quite broad enough where it *is* broad. But it is not 'as *broad* as it is *long*,' which is what all farces ought to be. Young ladies as well bred as they are well dressed, and young gentlemen 'to match,' are interlopers in the region of farce. Let Mr. Peake eschew all such amiable insipidities, and he will do well. In short, let him cultivate the *gentilities* of life not a step farther than they fall in with the case (anything but genteel) of Mr. Wrench; and then he cannot go very far wrong. Above all, let him have nothing to say to young ladies who are a whit more like Lady Teazle than Miss Kelly is. They are ticklish handling in all cases; and in his there is no answering for the mischief they may do.

'Crabbed age and youth  
Cannot live together';—

and no more can the ultra-ridiculous and the flat common-place—Mr. Keeley as a Savoyard organ-boy, and Miss Goward as a sensitive school-girl. The contrast (so to speak) does not harmonize. *Au reste*, the name of the new farce is the worst thing belonging to it. It includes a fox-hunting Admiral, played, or rather worked, with great effect by Bartley;—a bluff and blundering boatswain, which Fawcett acted to the life, that is to say, somewhat disagreeably;—a person wearing a white hat and pea-green pantaloons, things always enough to make the sight of Mr. Wrench pleasant; a suppositious spinster (Mrs. Davenport), who turns out to be the parent of one of the 'little offsprings,' her brother the Admiral being similarly situated as to the other;—and finally, the 'offsprings' themselves, played (as aforesaid) by Miss Goward and Mr. Keeley, and about whom there is a good deal of ingenious equivoque which touches upon the extreme edge where such matters are, now-a-days, so apt to fall over. They pretty nearly did so on the above occasion, which has, no doubt, induced Mr. Peake to make the proper sacrifices to the suspicious delicacy of 'some people's ears.'

*King's Theatre.*

Don Giovanni was played at this theatre on Thursday for the benefit of Madame Caradori, in which Mademoiselle Sontag sustained the part of Donna Anna with great truth and effect.

We said something lately on the company at the holiday theatres: we have something to say on the company at the Opera. We have little hesitation in stating (we speak of the pit) that in its way it is quite as bad: from boisterous rudeness and familiarity it rises into distance and superciliousness. If for instance at the Surrey

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or the Coburg you see two fellows quarrelling which is the master and which is the man, at the King's Theatre you hear an elegant discourse on 'the higher and the lower orders.' A critic at Covent-Garden or Drury-Lane thinks Sadler's Wells or the East London *low* : a critic of the self-same stamp, but one of softer phrase, pronounces the condemnation of the drama in good set terms as altogether exploded in the fashionable circles, and as flourishing most in our manufacturing towns and the semi-barbarous states of North America. You hear another take up the lamentable theme of an interval in the succession of regular Opera-singers, as if it were a pause in nature; and when notwithstanding he has heard Braham sing very well in '*this house*,' repeating the words as if the atmosphere at the Hay-market wafted other sounds than common air, and music were a geographical distinction. Thus it is that an Englishman is always pinning his faith on places and persons; and that he cannot arrive (for the soul of him, let him be taught and trammelled how he will) at the contemplation of an abstract idea : and yet the booby talks of refinement. He has no conception of anything but from the situation where he finds it; or the figure it makes in the eyes of some one as wise as himself; or from its being a foil to some defect in others. You hear none of this gabble at the *Théâtre Français*, or the Italian Opera in Paris, about those exploded authors Racine and Molière, or the low buffoonery of the *Théâtre des Variétés*, because they understand or relish both : we, unfortunately, who understand and relish neither, are obliged to create an artificial admiration of what is exotic out of our contempt for what is native, and pamper our pretensions to refinement by constantly dwelling on the vulgarity of the lower orders. Delightful it is to hear the Frenchwomen speaking of 'the vulgar Englishwomen' in a lump, as these same Englishwomen speak of all the rest of their country-women ! In France, to laugh and weep (at least with the comic or the tragic Muse) is not held vulgar. All wit is not confined to a shake of the toe, nor all sense to the squall of an Opera-singer, though they dance and give concerts as well as we. But in England our object is not the pursuit of pleasure, but to run away from the pleasures of others; and when a taste for the drama or anything else becomes a little common, we grow sulky and insensible by way of being spiritual and refined. We see no other refinement in the case, unless the getting rid of thought and feeling is a proof of refinement; and the *figurantes* at the Opera are an intermediate link, a soft imperceptible gradation, between the grossness of human passion and the absence of all human sympathy. Do the upper classes speak in recitative? Do they, in answer to a common question, vault into the air? Perhaps a Noble Duke might make one of his speeches

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intelligible by singing it, or solve the difficulties of the Corn question by calling out the Lord Chancellor to dance a minuet with him! We import Opera-singers, dancers, kings! Liberal land! That knows its own deficiencies in what is refined and elevated! Happy, that it finds others so ready to oblige it! All that they get from us, is hard blows or hard cash: all that we get from them, is politeness and luxury! In a word the question comes to this—*Are the English an essentially vulgar people or not?* If all that they have of their own is vulgar and unworthy of the notice of the upper classes, then the unavoidable inference is that the upper classes themselves are unworthy to see anything better, and are the most vulgar fashionable audience in Europe. If we have the least possible capacity for the fine arts, namely, dancing, music, painting, then we must be, in spite of letters-patent of nobility, or a box at the opera, or a *chapeau-bras*, or an opera-glass, the worst possible judges of them; and if we would be anything at all, must set up for something else. Indeed, the effects are plain enough. There is that little Brocard; she was at one time a model of voluptuous, languishing grace; but it was thrown away upon the higher orders, and she now does nothing but walk on the tips of her toes. The little trifler, she that we have praised so often! We are after all in such matters a Bartlemy-fair audience—or for a tumbler's show! Is Madame Pasta a favourite with the great vulgar? Not in the least. They hear her fame, but not her. What piteous, vacant aspects in the fine gentleman in the pit the first night of Mademoiselle Sontag's appearance! And what would they not have given (before committing themselves beyond an applause which might be construed into a good-natured encouragement) to know what the newspapers would say the next day! What then is the amount of this exclusive preference and fastidious superiority of fashionable taste? Mere arrogance and affectation. Look at the men in the pit. Are they in raptures with the ballet or the music? They are solely occupied in thinking how they themselves look, whether their coat is of the right cut, their cravat properly tied, and whether their next neighbour is good enough for them to speak to. Each opera-beau ought to have a glass-case over him to keep him within a certain precise sphere of *dandy* repulsiveness and self-importance. In an O. P. row you are in danger of being knocked down: in the *still-life* of the Opera-house, every one seems in fear of touching his neighbour's elbow. The disagreeable either in thought or action is inseparable from our fogs and sea-coal fires. Look at the women in the boxes. Are they at their ease? Or do they not keep one fixed attitude, or else loll, and laugh, and stare without meaning? The great thing is not to seem to take an interest; and this is not difficult, where none

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is felt. If to paint, to dress, to intrigue, and be insensible, is the height of refinement, then the women in the lobbies are even more refined than they. Do we then subscribe to this total disqualification of the English character? No: we have hearts and heads for other things besides the mechanism of the senses. We have books, which we send through the heart of all Europe; but our people of fashion and our parade of gentility are the laughing-stock of the world. One service which the work on Lord Byron and his Contemporaries has done the public, one offence it has given to the insolent few, is that it shews that even the strongest minds are not exempt from the shallowness and pedantry of this kind of jargon. The Noble Poet somewhere says that he and Tom Moore wrote well, because he himself from birth, and Mr. Moore from circumstances (circumstances indeed!) moved in the fashionable world. If this were all, we should have some thousands of fine geniuses come out every year, 'the mob of gentlemen who write with ease!' Why, instead of opening the casket to examine the contents, are we to be always looking at the outside? Or why, having found a jewel in it, persist that the wrapper was coarse brown paper? When we hear all the inhabitants of this great country whose names are not inscribed in the Red Book, or who are not crammed into the stifling, glittering atmosphere of the King's Theatre, stigmatised with the sweeping epithet of 'the lower orders,' our patience is a little out at elbows, and the answer, we fear, will not come from the pen alone! What is it that my Lord-Duke brings with him from the Continent—that he shews to his fellow-travellers as a precious curiosity—that he folds up and unfolds with such care? Is it a cameo, a drawing by Raphael, a bit of Claude? It is a copy of the Great Tun of Heidelberg! When did the polite world think it allowable for the last time to throng to the English theatre in crowds and with their expectations excited to the utmost? To see young Mr. Kean, a boy just come from Eton (classical reminiscence!) in the part of Norval! Or to see the bottle-conjuror, or a thing born with a crown on its head, or any other rare and striking novelty! Spare us, man of fashion, in the name of refinement!

### THE BEGGARS' OPERA

*The Examiner.*

*Covent Garden, May 11, 1828.*

ON Tuesday, the Beggars' Opera was acted here; or rather, half the Beggars' Opera to half a house. This is as it should be: if the Managers start and shrug up their shoulders at one half of a play, the public will shrink from the other. It is always wrong to cry

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*stale fish.* We suspect some clerical critic, some Jeremy Collier of the *Times*, has had a hand in this : what have these reverend divines to do with profane stage-plays, any more than poets and novelists with writing *lay-sermons*? Everything in our day is turned topsy-turvy : nothing prevails but 'vanity, chaotic vanity.' The consequence of this sort of slur and neglect thrown upon the piece is, that it is indifferently acted. There is not, in the expressive green-room phrase, 'a hand in the house' : and without that, the performer has no heart to proceed. A player can no more act with spirit unless he sees the reflection of his excellence in the looks and satisfaction of the audience, than a fine lady can dress without a looking-glass. He makes a hit and it fails of effect ; he is therefore thrown out, and the next time he does wrong or he does nothing. Filch (Meadows) picks a pocket as if he was afraid of being detected by the pit : Miss Kelly is shocked at the part of Lucy, and flounces and elbows through it as if she wished to get out of it, putting a negative on an *encore* that is likely to detain her five minutes longer in Newgate : Miss Stephens (the charming Polly) is frightened at the interest she *might* inspire, and is loth to 'waste her sweetness on a *blackguard* air : ' the Captain (Mr. Wood) is the only person who stands fire on the trying occasion. This gentleman is the best Macheath we have seen for a long time (for in criticism as in law we must have our statute of limitations)—more of a gentleman than Incledon, a better singer than Davies, less affected than Young, less finical than Sinclair, as 'pretty a fellow' as Madame Vestris—good-looking, gallant, debonair, and vocal. Bartley is too 'splenetic and rash' for Lockitt, who should be sullen and hardened as his prison-walls ; Blanchard is not round and set enough for Peachum, his figure dangling and his voice crackling like a lawyer's parchment ; Mrs. Davenport alone remained in her original muslin apron, silk gown, and pinnars (a Sybil, yet how unlike a prophetess !) to overlook and wonder at the desolation of the classic scene. We are more and more convinced that there is a time for everything, and that good plays must give place to bad ones. It is not possible (with a mixed audience) to keep alive the ridicule of manners after the manners themselves have ceased, nor to preserve them in the spirit of wit, or exhibit them even in mock-heroics. The stage is but the counterpart of existing follies—

' And when the date of Nock was out,  
Off fell the sympathetic snout.'

However, the Beggars' Opera has run a century. That's pretty well. Oh George Colman the Younger, Messrs. Reynolds and Morton, how will you rejoice, could you lift up your heads a hundred

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years hence, and see a five-act play of yours cut down to a one-act farce ! It is not that there are not plenty of rogues and pickpockets at present ; but the Muse is averse to look that way ; the imagination has taken a higher flight ; wit and humour do not flow in that dirty channel, picking the grains of gold out of it. Instead of descending, we aspire ; and the age has a sublime front given to it to contemplate the heaven of drawing-rooms and the milky-way of fashion. You are asked if you like Fielding, as if it were a statuteable offence ; and it was justly observed the other day in a comparison between De Vere and Count Fathom, that in a refined period like ours, a rogue aims at nothing short of being Prime-Minister ! In a word, the French Revolution has spoiled all, like a great stone thrown into a well ‘ with hollow and rueful rumble,’ and left no two ideas in the public mind but those of high and low. The jealousy of gentility, the horror of being thought vulgar, has put an end to the harmless *double-entendre* of wit and humour ; and the glancing lights and shades of life (nothing without each other) are sunk into the dull night of insipidity and affectation. So be it, and so it will be ! Yet ‘ we have heard the chimes at midnight ’ for all this, and passed over Hounslow and Bagshot, not without a *twinge* of the recollection of other times, as well as responsive to the names of Pope, of Gay, and Queensberry’s Duchess ! Nor is it so long since we have seen good company and full houses grace the representation of Tyburn-tree : we remember old Sir John Sylvester among others (with we believe his two daughters) who had a keen relish for an execution, and stedfastly contemplated under black bushy eyebrows that irrefragable order of ideas (as Mr. Hobbes calls it) ‘ the thief, the judge, and the gallows ; ’ and Mr. Vansittart, who smiled with conscious simplicity at the satirical allusions to Ministers of State, might be supposed to be comparing the terseness and point of Gay’s style with his own ‘ wolds and sholds,’ and seemed to think that nothing but an *evangelical* housebreaker was wanting to the perfection of the plot ! —We could not stay out A Race for Dinner, though invited by Mr. Wrench,—who has become as hungry as a hunter of late,—but made the best of our way to the other house (old Drury) in search of a criticism. We could almost fancy Covent Garden had got there before us, for there we found nearly the whole former strength of the rival house drawn up in battle-array before us—‘ and Birnamwood was come to Dunsinane ’—through what bickerings, what strifes, what heart-burnings, what jealousies between actors, what quarrels with managers, what want of pay, and demands for more, is easy (though not pleasant) to guess. They had also brought the Poor Gentleman with them ; and both together brought a full house.

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Nothing, could be better acted. Looking at them with 'eyes of youth' (which we always take with us to the theatre) we seemed as it were to witness something like a *turn-out* of Chelsea pensioners on the boards; and the sentiments of the play were of a piece with this patriotic and charitable impression. About thirty years ago, when John Bull took a particular fit of hatred against the French, he also fell in love with himself; and the dramatic writers of that day undertook to shew John his own face, his virtues or vices 'to advantage dressed' in a succession of plays which were properly *Dedications to the English nation*. We have the *Whole Duty of Man* bound up in a coarse, unattractive exterior; the Virtues in the front of the stage, though the Graces stand a little in the back-ground; and all the charities of private life clustering together on the stage, as they do round the domestic hearth. We have nothing but generous uncles, dry in their manner, but their heart and their purse overflowing with liberality—dutiful nephews, thoughtless but well-meaning, and falling into scrapes and love at every turn—reclaimed seducers—exemplary young ladies—old servants surly, but honest (the English character)—a chattering apothecary, the butt of the village and a foil to our self-love—an old soldier, a favourite in the family, and with us, for he has been wounded in our defence—a poor gentleman, in want of money which he refuses by mistake from some munificent patron, in consequence of not being so shrewd as the audience, and who is in hourly danger of a prison, from which *we* hope to escape. All this hits our delicate and improved moral tastes much better than sneering at our vices or laughing at our follies. Live sentiment, perish satire! Then there is so much distress, which it is so delightful to sympathize with—so much money circulating to relieve it (which it is so delightful to hear and to see; it is almost like attending a charity-sermon, or seeing Mr. Irving himself pawn his watch out of an excess of missionary zeal)—then there are so many tears starting into the eye, so many squeezes of the hand, so many friends and relations falling into one another's arms, as cannot but move the most obdurate—so many bailiffs in the wind, so many duels broken off by the entrance of some antiquated spinster who is always prying into mischief, or of some charming young creature who is the cause of it. We hope the other actors and actresses who acquitted themselves so admirably in their several parts,—Mr. Dowton in Sir R. Bramble, Mr. Mathews in Ollapod, Mr. Liston in Corporal Foss, Mr. Cooper in Lieutenant Worthington, Mr. Jones in Frederic, Mrs. Davison in Miss Mactab,—will excuse us if we pass them over on this occasion to pay our compliments to Miss Ellen Tree, who played Emily Worthington, and who certainly

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comes under the description of persons last-mentioned. Without any appearance of art, she played so well that she seemed the character itself, with the ease and simplicity of an innocent school-girl. Her figure is very pleasing—her voice is like her sister's—and she has the handsomest mouth in the world. We will not attempt to describe it for two reasons: first, because we cannot; secondly, because we *dare* not. In Mr. Jones's School for Gallantry she might have been called the *bon bouche*. Amidst the chopping and changing of the theatres, we had forgotten Mr. Jones was at Drury Lane; and inquired after the success of his new piece at Covent Garden. We naturally enough received an answer almost as cold as the moon which shines through the bars of his hero's prison-chamber. We were glad however to find that the wit and pleasantry diffused over it, if faint, had much of the agreeable lustre of that mild planet. We should suppose the plot borrowed from the country where the scene is laid. Cupid seems always on garrison-duty in the Prussian monarchy, and the spirit of adventure and gallantry somewhat languishes and grows trifling when it is kept (as everything there is) under lock and key. After what we have said of Miss E. Tree, we will not forfeit our reputation for gallantry by saying anything less obliging of Miss Love, who plays a young hussar officer in this piece, than that we like her best when she is drest most like herself.

### THE TAMING OF THE SHREW AND L'AVARE

*The Examiner.*

*Drury Lane, May 18, 1828.*

THE Taming of the Shrew was revived here on Wednesday, with the original words and additional songs. We however missed Christopher Sly, that supreme dramatic critic, who should have sat in lordly judgment on the piece, and given a drunken relief to it. This representing of a play within a play (of which Shakspeare was fond) produces an agreeable theatrical perspective—it is like painting a picture in a picture—and intimates pointedly enough that all are but shadows, the pageants of a dream. We also missed Mr. Liston in this part; for we understand he has some good quips and crotchets about it. Unless we saw him, we cannot pretend to say how he would do it; for we consider Mr. Liston in the light of an author rather than of an actor, and he makes his best parts out of his own head or face, in a sort of *brown study*, with very little reference to the text. He has nevertheless more comic humour oozing out of his features and person than any other actor in our remembrance, or than we have any positive evidence of since the time of Hogarth.

## THE EXAMINER

No one is *stultified*, no one is *mystified* like him—no one is so deep in absurdity, no one so full of vacancy; no one puzzles so over a doubt, or goes the whole length of an extravagance like him—no one chuckles so over his own conceit, or is so dismayed at finding his mistake:—the genius of folly spreads its shining gloss over his face, tickles his nose, laughs in his eyes, makes his teeth chatter in his head, or draws up every muscle into a look of indescribable dulness, or freezes his whole person into a lump of ice (as in Lubin Log) or relaxes it into the very thaw and dissolution of all common sense (as in his Lord Grizzle). Munden's acting (which many prefer, and in this number may be included Mr. Liston himself) was external, overdone, and aimed at the galleries—it was a sort of prodigious and inspired *face-making*—Liston's humour bubbles up of itself, and runs over from the mere fulness of the conception. If he does not go out of himself, he looks into himself, and ruminates on the idea of the idle, the quaint, and the absurd, till it does his heart good within him, and makes 'the lungs of others crow like chanticleer.' Munden's expressions, if they could have been taken off on the spot, would have made a capital set of grotesque masks: Liston's would make a succession of original comic sketches, as rich as they are true:—Mr. Wilkie failed in attempting one of them—his pencil was not oily and unctuous enough. We have seen many better comedians, that is, better imitators of existing or supposed characters and manners—such as Emery, Little Simmons, Dowton, and others—we know no other actor who has such a fund of drollery in himself, or that makes one laugh in the same hearty unrestrained manner, free from all care or controul, that we do with Sancho Panza or Parson Adams. We have heard a story of Mr. Liston being prevented by some accident from attending his professional duties, and wrapping himself up in a flannel gown and heart's-content over a winter fire, to read our good old English novelists for a fortnight together. What fine marginal notes his face would make! Which would he enjoy most, the blanket falling and discovering philosopher Square behind it, or the drawing up of the curtain and the broad laugh of the pit? We will answer that question for him. The meanest apprentice that sees a play for the first time from the gallery, has more pleasure than the most admired actor that ever trod the stage: there is more satisfaction in reading one page of a sterling author with good faith and good will, than the writer had in the composition or even the success of all his works put together. The admiration we bestow on others comes from the heart; but never returns back to it. Vanity closes up the avenues, or envy poisons it. This digression is too long: without sometimes going

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out of our way, we should hardly get to the end of our task.—The revival, on the whole, went off pleasantly, though the acting was not remarkably good, nor the music by any means enlivening. Jaques's recommendation to Amiens—'Warble, warble,'—seems to be the device of most modern composers, who think that, if they string a set of unmeaning notes together, it must be heavenly harmony. 'Tis pitiful. We are sick to death of this interpolated *sing-song*; nor do we think it much mended by proceeding from the mouth of Mr. Braham, who is in such cases a piece of operatic fleecy-hosiery. He is a walking woollack:—'And when the bag was opened, the voice, began to sing,' &c. We may be wrong in this matter, and speak under correction of better judges; but we confess that the everlasting monotonous alternation of the thunder of the spheres and the softness of nightingales, of the notes of the trumpet and the lute, the forked lightning and gentle moon-beams, Mr. Braham's thick-set person, infantine gestures and dying cadences, all together throw us into a fit of despondency. Miss Fanny Ayton's shrill voice and acute features did not serve to dispel our chagrin. The rest of the piece was tolerably cast. Wallack was the hero of it, who does not want for spirit or confidence; and a man's good opinion of himself is always half-way towards deserving it, and obtaining that of others. Cooper did not play his pretended master well: he is too grave and straight-forward an actor for these sort of sudden shifts and doubtful subterfuges. The best-done scene was the quarrel between Russell as the tailor, and Harley as Petruchio's man, about the gown and cap. The quaint antique humour was happily hit off, and studiously dallied with, so as not to slur it over, but to bring it out. Some fastidious critics may object to the puerile conceit and tenuity of meaning that pleased our ancestors in such idle squabbles—we think we could cite graver polemics to match it in shabby excuses and verbal trifling in the present day. The old-fashioned dresses recalled the image of former times; and the scenery that of places, which can never grow old. The last scene, in which the brides are sent for and brought in, had an excellent effect; and the second representation was announced with every sign of satisfaction. It may not be improper to add here, that the Taming of the Shrew is one of the pieces that have been transplanted (not without a good deal of pruning) to the French stage, and that Mademoiselle Mars plays the part of Katharine with equal spirit and success.

M. Perlet took the Avare for his benefit at this theatre last week. We are sorry we are about to lose this excellent actor, who has given us much pleasure and instruction. *Au revoir*. We saw him

## THE EXAMINER

only in the latter part of Molière's *Miser*: his thinness, his dress, and the keys at his girdle fitted the character exactly. It was chiefly in the scenes where he runs mad at losing his casket of gold, or seizes on Anselme as the father of the supposed robber to demand restitution of him, that the ruling passion and the greater actor broke out. In the first of these scenes particularly, where he catches hold of his own arm, thinking to arrest the thief, he shews all the rage and phrensy of the most tragic vehemence; and in throwing himself exhausted on the ground, bewailing his hard hap, and appealing to the pity of an imaginary audience, whom his despair conjures up, and then lashing himself up to impatience and fury again, proves his entire acquaintance with the ebb and flow, the risings and sinkings of the human heart. These particular passages appeared to us, however, like patches or excrescences on the general texture of the performance (perhaps they are so in the play itself, which is not one of Molière's best). If we may hazard a conjecture on a subject on which we do not feel altogether *at home*, we should say that M. Perlet's *Miser* was in its ordinary aspect rather the serving-man in a half-famished house, than a personification of the demon of selfishness, fretfulness, and avarice. It was hard and indifferent—not gloating enough, not morbid enough, not restless and harassed enough. Farther, we suspect there is this fault in his general acting and in French comedy: we grant it is not gross; is it not, on the other hand, too slight and evanescent? They charge us with over-doing: are they not then liable to under-do, and fall short of the mark? If there is such a thing as caricature, there is also an antithesis to it, and not only a danger of loading a character to excess, but of giving a profile or section of it for the whole, and not taking all the licence that truth and nature gives. We are dreadfully afraid of being misled by national prejudices; but (that being premised) we cannot but add our conviction that M. Perlet's acting, with all its purity, propriety, and spirit, wants something of richness and breadth.—The little piece which followed the *Avare*, *Ninette à la Cour*, was delightful both in itself and as giving Mademoiselle Fanny Vertpres an opportunity to display her *mignon* figure and provoking ways. There seem to be two styles of female coquetry in France, extreme flutter and vivacity, or perfect calmness and self-possession. The one is set in motion by everything; the other is put out of its way by nothing. Miss Fanny Vertpres is of the latter class. With great presence of mind and ready wit, she joins to the symmetry the apparent coolness and indifference of a marble statue. She takes everything in good part, and slides into a number of ticklish adventures and situations with all

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the ease imaginable. She is only troubled at being laughed at—a misfortune against which no French patience is proof. The scenes behind the looking-glass and behind her fan with her rustic lover (Laporte), whom she beguiles in an enchanting feigned voice (prettier even than her own) are quite delightful, and dispose one to believe that comedy has not yet exhausted all its precious stores. Mademoiselle St. Ange played the Countess with all her country's ease and grace. Monsieur Laporte strikes us as a confirmation of the remarks we have made above on French comedy, by the very circumstance of his being an exception to them. There is nothing *automatic* in his manner. He not only utters a jest, but he enjoys it too—not that he forces it upon us either, except by the gentle violence of sympathy. There is (so to speak) an atmosphere of humour about him, which reflects the immediate object with kindly warmth and lustre. His acting both in *Maître Jacques* and in the after-piece evinced that easy play of feeling, that transition from grave to gay, that mixture of wit and folly, those natural varieties of laughter and tears, which mark the master in his art and the genuine son of Momus.

We dropped in at Covent Garden to see Mr. Warde in the *Seraglio* and Charles Kemble in *Charles the Second*, who seems really born for the character, and whose fine person and accomplishments are thrown away in these degenerate days. Mr. Power makes a very passable Irish Rochester: but the wit and the rake had defects enough of his own to answer for, without having the *brogue* added to them. The same fault may be found with Mr. Warde, who would make a very respectable actor in the middle walk of tragedy, could he but controul his voice within the compass of the four seas.

### MRS. SIDDONS

*The Examiner.*

May 25, 1828.

THERE has been no novelty this week at any of our theatres, English or French, except that little Mademoiselle Jenny Vertpre has been metamorphosed into a cat, and has been playing in the *Pie Voleuse* at the Lyceum. She played the first charmingly; the last prettily, though we have seen it done better. There is a *calibre*, a weight of metal in Miss Kelly's pathos, which the French actress is without. Our lively neighbours are doubtless 'born to converse, to live, and *act* with ease'—all is set in motion like a feather, stopped like a feather. Smiles play upon the lips, tears start into their eyes and are dried up for nothing; an exclamation and a sigh settle the account between

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life and death ; all is a game at *make-believe*, thoughtless and innocent as childhood, in the baby-house of their imagination—but if you wish to see the heart-strings crack, go and see Miss Kelly in the Maid of Palisseau ; or if you would see the stately pillar of Tragedy itself fall and crush the subjected world, then you should have witnessed Mrs. Siddons formerly in some of her overwhelming parts. That was a flood of tears indeed—a drinking of the brimming cup of human joys and woes to the very last drop, the recollection of which may serve one all the rest of one's life. We understand that not long ago Sir Walter Scott and Mrs. Siddons met in the same room before Mr. Martin's picture of the Fall of Nineveh—two such spectators the world cannot match again, the one by the common consent of mankind the foremost writer of his age, the other in the eyes of all who saw her prime or her maturity, the queen and mistress of the tragic scene. Forgive us, gentle, ever-living shade of Jenny Deans, agonised soul of Balfour of Burley, heroic spirit of Rebecca of York, immortal memory of Dumbiedikes and of a thousand more, if we should have turned from you and from him who invented you, to bow the knee and kiss the hem of the garment of her who represented to our youthful gaze the Mourning Bride, Hermione, Belvidera, Beverley's wife, and was the Muse of Tragedy personified. We are sorry that Mrs. Siddons has abridged *Paradise Lost*, and that Sir Walter has written a triumphant peroration over 'the worst, the second fall of man.' We are perhaps runagates and Goths ; but the smell of the links that used to ply between Covent garden and Drury lane prevails in our imagination over all the heather-bloom of Scotland, and we declare that Mrs. Siddons appears to us the more masculine spirit of the two. Sir Walter (when all's said and done) is an inspired butler, a 'Yes and No, my Lord' fellow in a noble family—Mrs. Siddons is like a cast from the antique, or rather like the original, divine or more than human, from which it was taken. Yet close to each other, within narrow space, were placed two heads, on which glory sat plumed, beat two hearts over which had rolled the volume of earth's bliss or woe, were interchanged glances that had reflected the brightness of the universe. Who would not rather see Sir Walter Scott's fringed eyelids and storied forehead than the vacant brow of prince or peer ? When Mrs. Siddons used to sit in parties and at drawing-rooms, the Lady Marys and the Lady Dorothys of the day came and peeped into the room to get a glance of her, with more awe and wonder than if it had been a queen. This was honour, this was power. There was but one person in the world who would have drawn the gaping gaze of curiosity from these and from all the crowned heads in Europe ; and Sir Walter exults that he perished like a felon in the grasp of a jailor.

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We must indeed admire the talents, when we forgive the use of them : or is it that genius, with its lofty crest and variegated colours, seems destined like the serpent to lick the dust, and crawl all its life with its belly on the ground? We can reckon up in our time three great tragic performers; Mrs. Siddons, Mr. Kean, and Madame Pasta. (If there is a fourth instance, we either know not of it, or it is Miss Kelly : but that in a parenthesis, as our private opinion, or that of persons no wiser than ourselves.) Of these three, Mrs. Siddons seemed to command every source of terror and pity, and to rule over their wildest elements with inborn ease and dignity. Her person was made to contain her spirit; her soul to fill and animate her person. Her eye answered to her voice. She wore a crown. She looked as if descended from a higher sphere, and walked the earth in majesty and pride. She sounded the full diapason, touched all chords of passion, they thrilled through her, and yet she preserved an elevation of thought and character above them, like the tall cliff round which the tempest roars, but its head reposes in the blue serene! Mrs. Siddons combined the utmost grandeur and force with every variety of expression and excellence: her transitions were rapid and extreme, but were massed into unity and breadth—there was nothing warped or starting from its place—she produced the most overpowering effects<sup>1</sup> without the slightest effort, by a look, a word, a gesture. Mr. Kean, in the intellectual and impassioned part, is in our judgment equal to any one, but he produces his most striking effects by fits and starts, without the same general tone and elevation of character, and, for want of the instrumental advantages, with an appearance of effort and sometimes of extravagance. Madame Pasta, on the contrary, never goes out of her way, never aims at effect or startles by any one pointed passage, nor does she combine a variety of feelings together (as far as we have seen) but she rises to the very summit of her art, and satisfies every expectation by absolute and unbroken integrity of purpose, and by the increasing and unconscious intensity of passion. She has neither Mr. Kean's inequalities nor Mrs. Siddons's scope: she neither deviates from the passion nor rises above it, but she commits herself wholly to its impulse, borrows strength from its strength, ascends with it to heaven, or is buried in the abyss. In a word, she is the creature of

<sup>1</sup> Lady Byron, when a girl, was so affected at seeing Mrs. Siddons as Isabella, in the Fatal Marriage, that she was carried out fainting into the lobbies, and kept sobbing and exclaiming involuntarily 'Oh, Byron, Byron!' Egad, she had enough of Byron afterwards. This good-natured remark is not ours. Whose, reader, do you suppose it is? We have heard the late Mr. Curran say, that when he was a young man studying the law at the Temple, his supreme delight was to see Mrs. Siddons in her great parts, and all he wanted was a couple of *pails* on each side of him to fill them with his tears! Such things have been.

## THE EXAMINER

truth and nature, and joins the utmost simplicity with the utmost force. This has little to do with Mademoiselle Jenny Vertpre : ah ! she is charming too, and we hope to have a great deal to say in her praise—twenty years hence. She counts her silver spoons inimitably, and when she is suspected of stealing one of them says, '*C'est désagréable,*' in a voice and manner that none but a Frenchwoman can. The Misanthrope and the Bourgeois Gentilhomme have been repeated at this theatre ; and M. Perlet has done equal justice to Moliere's sententious gravity in the one, and to his delightful flighty farce and fanciful exaggeration of folly in the other. Molière is our Wycherley and O'Keefe, both in one : or it might be said that he possessed the critical sense of Montaigne, with the exuberant mirth and humour of Rabelais.—We believe this little theatre, with its lively company and excellent pieces, answers tolerably well, as most French theatres do. We were thinking of this the other evening, and thought we had accounted for it. The French performances, with a tenth of the audience, pay better than the English with ten times the number and receipts. How so ? It arises, on a critical inquiry, from the unity of place, which is the fundamental law of the French drama. One barbarism leads to another ;—a slight technical distinction involves manager after manager in bankruptcy and ruin. Where there is no change of situation, the scenery is the same ; and where this is the case, it is no object either of attraction or expense. Little more is required than a drop-scene. Therefore, all you have to do is to get good plays, and a good company to perform them : three or four hundred people in the house will maintain a dozen or a score of comedians on the stage ; and the excellence of the performance and the taste of the town keep pace with one another, and with the absence of show and extrinsic decoration. But with us all this is reversed. The scene travels, and our scene-shifters, scene-painters, mechanists, and the whole theatrical *commissariat* go along with it. The variety, the gaudiness, the expense is endless : to pay for the getting up such an immense apparatus, the houses must be enlarged to hold a proportionable rabble of 'barren spectators : ' the farther off they are thrown, the stronger must be the glare, the more astonishing the effect, and the play and the players (with all relish for wit or nature) dwindle into insignificance, and are lost in the blaze of a huge chandelier or the grin of a baboon. We do not see the features of the actors, but we admire (very justly) Mr. Stanfield's landscape back-grounds, or a castle set on fire by Mr. Farley ; we hear the din and bray of the orchestra, not the honeyed words of the poet ; and still we wonder that operas and melo-dramas flourish, and that the legitimate stage and good old English Comedy languishes. Poor old green curtain ! when

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thou wast withdrawn to make room for gas-lights and shining marble pillars, the last relic of the heart-felt pageant faded ; and the *Veluti in speculum* flew after *Astræa* to the skies !

### THE THREE QUARTERS, &c.

*The Examiner.*

*Drury Lane, June 1, 1828.*

THE new comedy in three acts brought out at this theatre on Tuesday evening is, we apprehend, taken from a French piece, entitled *Les Trois Quartiers*. The Three Quarters of the town indicate the three sorts or stages of society, as they are to be met with in the *Rue St. Honoré*, the *Rue Mont Blanc*, and the *Fauxbourg St. Germain*, which may be supposed to answer (we speak under correction of the Secretary of the Admiralty, skilled as he is in the transitions from low to high life) to our Fish-street-hill, Russell and Grosvenor square. It was thought a nice distinction in Miss Burney, forty years ago, to place the residence of the Harrells in Portman square, and to assign Grosvenor square to the Delville family ; the one being considered as the resort of the upstart fashionables, the other of the old gentry. To know whether this court-geography holds good in the present year, see the files of the *John Bull*, or the *Last Series of Sayings and Doings*, where such matters are noted and discussed with a becoming want of elegance and decorum, which is made up for by the innate loftiness of the subject. In the French piece, a rich adventurer from South America is introduced into three different circles by an officious go-between, as a travelled prodigy, *un homme qui a vu Bolivar* ; and in each his perplexity and astonishment increases with the progress and refinement of manners in the Three Quarters of the town. There is some sense in that ; and the French actors have the skill to make the line of demarcation intelligible. But here we vow that though we shift the scene, no progress is made ; or we are *at the top of the tree* in the second stage. Kitty Corderoy is sufficiently forward and vulgar, it is true ; Amelia Mammonton is naturally elegant and genteel ; but we get no farther ; or rather Lady Charlewood is a falling off, having neither natural nor acquired grace ; and the Countess Dowager Delamere is distinguished by nothing but a rude and harsh familiarity of manner. The Banker (Mr. Cooper) has evidently the advantage of the Lord (Mr. Hooper) ; and Jack Pointer (Mr. Jones), a busy-body and toad-eater, carries it hollow by dint of sheer impudence and impertinence. Mr. Jones's Bond street slang—'She's a delicious creature'—is echoed every five minutes by Lady Delamere's—'You'll excuse my freedom, Lady Charlewood ;' the changes are rung upon

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a few and slender notes of fashion, while the author has the full range of the Cockney dialect, and sinks deep in the bathos of low life. Mrs. Corderoy, we observe, is played by a Mrs. C. Jones. Is Mr. Jones lately married? If so, we congratulate him: she is an excellent cook. We could wish the accomplished author of *Killing no Murder*, he who dips his pen so carelessly in poison or honey, the expert *improvisatori* in fact or fiction, would turn his thoughts to this matter; give us a comedy or criticism to shew our actors or play-wrights what they ought to do in these degenerate days; and from his ease of access to palaces or princes, give us a taste of true refinement, the court-air, the drawing-room grace, the after-dinner conversation, the mornings and the evenings of the great, instead of confining his abilities to teaching young gentlemen at Long's how to eat their fish with a silver fork: the waiters might do that just as well. Or could not Mr. Croker, now that Augustus has given peace to sea and land, and who shakes epics and reviews from his brow 'like dew-drops from the lion's mane,' *smile* a comedy that should point the nice gradations from the city to the court—

‘Fine by degrees, and beautifully less,’

and make it for ever impossible for Cheapside to pass Temple-bar or Russell-square to step into the Regent's Park? We understand, indeed, that Mr. Colburn has a plan in contemplation to remedy all this, and that we may look forward to the dawn of a new era in literature, through the happy idea which the little bookselling Buonaparte has conceived of establishing an inviolable *Concordat* between the world of genius and fashion. The proposal is to buy up the manuscripts of all authors by profession, to lock them in a drawer, so as to put the whole corps of Garretteers and Grub street writers on the shelf, and leave the door open to none but persons of quality and amateurs, lords, ladies, and hangers-on of the great. The scheme has in a great measure succeeded in the periodical department, and only requires a little management to be extended to the stage. What an air already breathes from the New Parnassus! What a light breaks over Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden! What delicacy, what discrimination, what refinement of sentiment! What halycon days! What peaceable productions! There will be no grossness, no violence, no political allusions or party spite! The best understanding will subsist between Government and men of letters, nor will there be any occasion for a Dramatic Censor, when Ministers of State furnish the plot, and Peeresses in their own right suggest the last corrections to the dialogue. There is no doubt the taste for the drama will be revived by means of such an arrangement—people of fashion will go to see what people

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of fashion write—the manners of high life will be reflected on the stage as in the mirrors at each end of the dress circle—

‘ They best can paint them who have known them most ; ’

the hireling crew will withdraw to hide themselves in a garret or a jail—the pit will wonder—the galleries be silent or shut up—Lord Porchester’s tragedy will be crowned with bays, Lord Morpeth’s transferred from the closet to the stage—Mr. Moore, by particular desire of several persons of distinction, will try his hand at another *Blue-Stocking* affair—and the *Sphinx*, the *Athenæum*, the *Argus* (a new evening), and the *Aurora* (a new morning paper), which Mr. Buckingham will by that time have set up on the same independent principles of voluntary contribution, will applaud to the skies the change which Mr. Colburn’s spirit and genius will have brought like a perfect paradise upon earth. It is whispered that a certain Duke has got through the first act of a piece, called ‘ The Deaf and Dumb Politician,’ but dreads the vulgar composition of the public taste :—nay, who knows but the coast being cleared of plebeian scribblers and the rabble of competitors, Majesty itself might not take the field, the Lady Godiva of the scene, in a night-gown and slippers, with a grand romantic interlude called ‘ The Prince and the Pretender, or the Year 1745 ’—with Mr. O— holding the glass-door in Burlington street for three days together in his hand, and Mr. C—p—b—ll to officiate as Peeping Tom—‘ Oh ! dearest Ophelia, we are ill at these numbers : ’ but neither Ups and Downs nor Carron-Side suggested anything better. Mr. Liston in the first played a city fortune-hunter, who pays his addresses to, who jilts, and is jilted by three mistresses in succession, to whom he is introduced by Jack Pointer (Jones), his pretensions rising with his fortune, and with whom he is confronted and exposed without much effect in the last act. He at first aspires no higher than to Kitty Corderoy, a tradesman’s daughter ; but having twenty thousand pounds left him, he contrives to cut with her, to her great joy, she being secretly in love with Mr. Christopher Higgins (Russell), her father’s apprentice, a person by no means approved by her mother Mrs. Corderoy (Mrs. C. Jones), because he himself is ‘ a little sneaking chap,’ and his father a tailor—as if tailors were not in the order of nature or of civil society. Our hero, that is, Mr. Felix Mudberry, next offers himself, with a large bunch of flowers and a suit of clothes picked up on the way at the Ready-made Dépôt, to Miss Amelia Mammonton (the charming Miss Ellen Tree), a banker’s sister, who is in love with Earl Delamere (Mr. Hooper), love and romantic sentiment, according to the situation or rank in which it is found, aiming at still greater and more airy

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heights. She laughs at him and his 'delicate attentions' (as she well may)—but being led to suppose that his uncle, Mr. Stanley, a Liverpool merchant, or as he used to call him 'Black Boy Billy,' is dead, and has left him a fortune of half a million, he begins to blubber out his sorrow for his uncle's death and his own 'good, he means, bad fortune,' stammers his excuses for leaving the company of Mr. Mammonton and his sister, and is wound up to a Countess by his mischievous prompter. Lady Charlewood (Miss I. Paton) is disgusted with the behaviour of her new and absurd admirer; her mother, the Countess Dowager Delamere (Mrs. Davison), admires his fortune, and patronises the match according to the etiquette of rank and high life. His inconstancy and meanness are however exposed in the meantime by Miss Kitty Corderoy who is intimate with both the young ladies, having been at the same school with them somewhere in the neighbourhood of London, and runs up and down 'the Ladder of Life' as she pleases (in the French play the corresponding character is a milliner, which is a little more in keeping)—and Mr. Felix Mudberry, in his own emphatic phrase, is 'blown' by all the three at once;—the bubble of his legacy also bursts, and Jack Pointer turning short round upon him at this extremity, advises him to go abroad again, make another fortune, and on his return, promises to introduce him to a Princess! Mr. Liston produced a good deal of laughter in the part, but perhaps from not being near enough to see his face, the drollery fell flat upon us. It was (to get within bow-shot of an Hibernicism) like hearing the report of a pistol, before seeing the flash. Weepers and a round hat do not move our risible muscles. We think Mr. Liston shines in the cockney, more than in the cockney and dandy together. 'He knows his cue best without a prompter.' His affectation even must be unaffected. We will match his lead against anybody's, we will not answer for the tinsel. We have a delicate request to make of him, that he would play Madge for his benefit and our satisfaction—unless Moll Flagon should complain of it as compromising her dignity. Is this piece Mr. Kenney's? It shivers on the brink of nothing, and plunges over head and ears into nonsense. We wish our authors and architects, if they must give us foreign models, would give them entire, and not by bits and samples, altering only to spoil.

*Covent Garden.*

Carron-Side, or the Fête Champêtre, a new Opera, the words by Mr. Planché, the music by M. Liverati, was brought out here on Tuesday, and was repeated on Thursday. The dialogue is tolerable;

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and so are the songs. Miss Stephens was the chief attraction in it; though she does not make much figure by Scottish stream or mountain. Mr. Sapio and Mr. Wood personated, the one a military, the other a naval hero in it, and maintained the superiority of their several professions in song and bold defiance—with equal loudness and skill. Miss Stephens (Blanche Mackay) the supposed daughter of a peasant, is in love with Captain Allan Lindsay (Sapio), and he with her, though he is about to be married to Grace Campbell (Miss Cawse), who likes another of her cousins, Cornet Hector Lindsay (Mr. Wood) quite as well or better, as far as we could judge by the event. When Blanche has to present a *bouquet* to the intended couple on the morning of their nuptials, and to sing a song of congratulation, her voice falters and she faints away in the midst of it. She then, partly through shame and partly through vexation, escapes to the house of the miller (Little Keely) and his wife (Miss Goward), where she is kindly received, but supposed by her own friends to have rashly drowned herself. The anguish of Captain Allan Lindsay is not to be restrained on this occasion, and betrays his passion for the unhappy girl, who is at the same time discovered not to be the real daughter of the old trumpeter Donald Mackay (Bartley), but the daughter of Mrs. Campbell, who had been supposed to be lost when an infant in the Spanish campaign. The mystery being cleared up, the secret of her birth is communicated to poor Blanche amidst her smiles and tears. Miss Grace Campbell under the circumstances, and from her previous indifference, declares for Cornet Lindsay, and Blanche is united to the Captain. Mr. Keely crept on and off the stage as usual; and Miss Cawse danced and flourished round it as she sung, because Madame Vestris does so. We are quite satisfied with Madame Vestris, without wishing to see her imitated.

### MR. KEAN

*The Examiner.*

June 15, 1828.

WE do not wonder at Mr. Kean's want of success in Paris. As they do not like or understand Shakespear, it is not to be supposed they should like or understand any one who goes near to represent him, or who gives anything more than a trite version or modernised paraphrase of him. Voltaire has borrowed largely from the English dramatist, and has taken Othello's dying speech almost entire, as far as the prose-ground of it, but has contrived to leave out all the striking, picturesque points of it:—so they would no doubt object to and cancel, by a sweeping condemnation, all the unexpected and

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marked beauties of an impassioned recitation of it. Whatever is not literal and conventional, is with them extravagant and grotesque: they have so long been accustomed (we are speaking of serious matters) to consider affectation as nature, that they consider nature when it comes across them as affectation and quaintness.

'The poet's eye, in a fine phrenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;  
And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.'

So the actor's eye (if truly inspired) comprehends more than is set down for him, starts at hidden fancies that only pale passion sees; and his voice is the trembling echo and the broken instrument of thoughts and of an agony that lie too deep for mere words to express. This licence, that is, this truth of nature is, with our accomplished and more thorough-bred neighbours, entirely out of the question. Their art, whether in poetry, acting, painting, is well-drilled regimental art:—it is art in uniform and on parade. Thus tragic poetry cannot, in its dumb despair, call on all nature to supply it with an appropriate language, that places what it feels in palpable and lofty imagery before the reader: it must, on the contrary, have its rhetorical and didactic flourishes all ready for the occasion—these may be as tedious, as pompous, as bombastic as you please, but to pass or allude to anything beyond them, is vile and Gothic indeed. The actor may mouth, rant, and whine as much as he pleases, so that he does it in measured time, and seems in perfect health and spirits all the while; but if he is once thrown off his guard, and loses sight of himself and the audience in the sufferings of his hero, it is all over with him. Again, an actor's face 'should be as a book where one may read strange matters.' This would be an inexpiable offence in France, where there is nothing strange, and where all must appear upon the surface or be kept quite out of sight, on the score of decency and good manners. As the poet must introduce no image or sentiment for which there is not a prescribed *formula*, so the tragedian must give no shade or inflection of feeling which the entire audience were not prepared complacently to anticipate. The self-love of the pit would rise in open rebellion if he did. In France it is a rule that no person is wiser than another: you cannot be beforehand with their conceit and infinite superiority in impertinence. So they themselves tell the story of a man who, hearing of the assassination of the Duke of Berri, and not willing to allow that his informant had the start of him on so interesting a topic, made

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answer—'Yes, I knew it!' We are not therefore surprised that the Parisians find fault with the only actor of much genius we possess : he must puzzle them almost as much as the Hetman Platoff; and this assuredly they cannot forgive, as in the present case their rank cowardice cannot get the better of their consummate vanity. It is ludicrous too that they should charge us with extravagance and fustian—they, who have their *Pensions de l' Univers* and *Diligences de l' Univers*<sup>1</sup> stuck on every pillar and post! As we know what the most refined people in the universe do not like, we are also happy in learning what they do like. For others to despise what we admire, is always to assume an attitude of seeming superiority over us : to admire what we do not think much of, is to give us our revenge again. Fastidiousness is here, as in many other cases, the effect not of an excess of refinement, but of a want of conception. When Voltaire called Shakespear a barbarian, we were a little staggered in our previous opinion, as we could not tell what lofty models of excellence he contemplated in his own mind; but when he pronounced Addison's Cato to be a perfect tragedy, we knew what to think of him and ourselves. He might as well have pronounced a marble slab to be a perfect statue. In like manner, it might 'give us pause' that such competent critics are dissatisfied with Mr. Kean, if we did not learn in the same breath that they are in raptures with Mr. C. Kemble, Mr. Macready, and Miss Smithson; not that we disapprove of the last, but that being our own country-people, we beg leave to judge of their relative merits better than foreigners. If they scouted our pretensions altogether, we might despond; but as they *laud* us in the wrong place, we may smile in our turn. The contradiction between us is not owing to an inferiority of nature, but to a difference of opinion. We can understand why, with reason, they admire Macready: he declaims well, and so far resembles good French actors. Mr. C. Kemble is not only an excellent actor, but a very good-looking man; and good looks are a letter of recommendation, whether among the Laplanders or Hottentots, at Zenith or the Pole. Miss Smithson is tall; and the French admire tall women. All these come under a class, and meet with obvious sympathy and approbation. Mr. Kean, on the other hand, stands alone,—is merely an original; and the French hate originality: it seems to imply that there is some possible excellence or talent that they are without! Besides, it appears that they expected him to be a giant. *Mon Dieu qu'il est petit!*—as if this was an insuperable bar to his bestriding the theatric world like a Colossus. He is diminutive, it is true: so was the *Little Corporal*:

<sup>1</sup> 'Lodging-houses for the Universe,' and 'Stage-coaches of the Universe.'

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but since the latter disappeared from the stage, they have ceased to be the *Great Nation*. They stir up our bile by their arrogance and narrow-mindedness, and we cannot help its overflowing in some degree of ill-humour and petulance. We were heartily glad to find that Mr. Knowles's tragedy of *Virginus* is well received in Paris—(we would always rather agree with, than differ from them, for we know their subtlety and double edge)—but this is to be attributed to the inherent and classical excellence of the composition. Its scenes present a series of elegant bas-reliefs, and are equally enchanting to the eye and to the ear.



## NOTES



## NOTES

### ART CRITICISM

Although the subject of painters and painting was never far from Hazlitt's pen, he held the formal position of art-critic to only two newspapers, both at the outset of his career of journalism—to *The Morning Chronicle* for a few months in 1814 (combining the rôle with those of dramatic critic, political leader-writer, and miscellaneous contributor) and to John Scott's *Champion* (again doubling it with that of dramatic critic) from July 1814 to March 1815. It was his writings on the Fine Arts in this newspaper, reprinted in the present volume, which introduced him to the notice of Jeffrey and secured him his place in *The Edinburgh Review* (see introductory note to vol. xvi.). On throwing in his lot with *The Examiner* he found the department of the fine arts occupied by the third Hunt, Robert; and his writings on the subject are henceforward incidental. Nevertheless, he retained his reputation as a critic of painting, and in 1816 contributed the article on the 'Fine Arts' to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. His association with magazines like Constable's *Edinburgh* and the *London* was the occasion of further occasional pronouncements on subjects of artistic interest, and to the latter he contributed the series on the *Picture Galleries in England* which he reprinted in 1824 (vol. x.). The present section is confined to such of his more formal writings on the subject of art as he did not himself reprint, by-products of his *Notes of a Journey in France and Italy*, such as 'The Vatican' and 'English Students at Rome' finding their more natural place among his uncollected essays (vol. xvii.), while papers of wider application like 'Originality,' 'The Ideal,' etc., are reserved for appearance with his miscellaneous writings in vol. xx.

### FRAGMENTS ON ART. WHY THE ARTS ARE NOT PROGRESSIVE.

Unsigned. The first paper and part of the second were reprinted by Hazlitt, with variations and omissions, in *The Round Table* (see vol. iv. pp. 160-63 and notes).

#### PAGE

7. *Claude Lorraine and Vandyke*. When Hazlitt reprints this passage he substitutes Guido for Claude. See vol. iv. p. 162.  
Note. *Sir Joshua used to say*. Northcote's information, no doubt.  
*Mr. Northcote's Dream of a Painter*. See Northcote's 'Varieties on Art (The Dream of a Painter)' in his *Memoirs of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 1813-15, I. 16.
8. 'There is no shuffling,' etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, III. 3. 61-64.
10. 'Pleasures of Memory,' . . . 'Pleasures of Hope.' Cf. vol. xi. p. 159.  
*Miss Burney's new novel*. *The Wanderer, or Female Difficulties*, appeared in this year, after an interval since *Camilla* (1796). Hazlitt reviewed it in the *Edinburgh Review* (vol. xvi.).  
*Miss Edgeworth's Fashionable Tales*. Miss Edgeworth's *Tales from Fashionable Life* appeared in two series, the first in 1809, the second in 1812.  
*Sir James Mackintosh's History*. See vol. xi. p. 103 and note.

## NOTES

### BRITISH INSTITUTION (1814): FIRST NOTICE

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

PAGE

10. *The exhibition of this year.* The British Institution was founded in 1805 at 52 Pall Mall and continued till 1866. The winter exhibition was of the works of living artists.
11. '*As if some of nature's journeymen,*' etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 38.
12. *Mr. Bird's picture of Job.* The painter was Edward Bird (1772-1819), elected a Royal Academician in 1815.
13. *Mr. Allston's large picture.* This picture by the 'American Titian,' Washington Allston (1779-1843), gained a prize of 200 guineas from the British Institution and is now at Philadelphia.  
*Mr. Hilton's picture.* By William Hilton (1786-1839), Royal Academician (1818).  
*Mr. West's picture.* For Benjamin West (1738-1820), who succeeded Reynolds (1792) as President of the Royal Academy, see the two articles in the present volume, and *Conversations of Northcote* (vol. x.).  
'*Pure religion,*' etc. Wordsworth's Sonnet, 'O Friend! I know not which way I must look,' etc.
14. *Society for the Suppression of Vice.* Cf. vol. iv. p. 60 and note.  
*Mr. Turner's grand landscape.* Now in the National Gallery and (wrongly) known as 'Apuleia in search of Apuleius.' The confusion seems to have arisen from a misreading by Turner of a story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (xiv. 517 *et seq.*) which the picture was designed to illustrate.  
*Lord Egremont's picture.* Cf. *Sketches of the Picture Galleries* (vol. x. p. 13).  
*Mercury and Herse.* Exhibited in 1811.  
*The Favourite Lamb.* By William Collins (1788-1847), landscape and figure painter.

### BRITISH INSTITUTION (1814): SECOND NOTICE

Unsigned. Now first reprinted.

In this and in the later notices of exhibitions the catalogue numbers have been omitted.

PAGE

14. *Mrs. J. Hakewell.* Maria C. Hakewell, an exhibitor at the British Institution 1808-38.  
*T. R. Guest.* Sic in catalogue. Probably Thomas Douglas Guest (fl. 1803-39), historical and portrait painter.
15. *Henry Monro.* (1791-1814), portrait and subject painter.  
*Owen.* William Owen, R.A. (1769-1825), portrait painter.  
*A. Perigal.* Arthur Perigal (?1784-1847), historical painter.  
*L. Cosse.* Lawrence J. Cossé, an exhibitor 1807-36.  
*Mrs. Ansley.* An exhibitor 1812-23.  
*J. J. Chalon.* John James Chalon, R.A. (1778-1854), landscape and genre painter.  
*James Burnet.* James M. Burnet (1788-1816), landscape painter.  
*John Dennis.* An exhibitor 1809-28.
16. *Ab. Cooper.* Abraham Cooper, R.A. (1787-1868), battle and animal painter.  
*James Green.* (1771-1834), portrait painter, who copied many of Reynolds's pictures.

## ART CRITICISM

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16. *Sir W. Beechey*, R.A. (1753-1839), portrait painter to Queen Charlotte.  
*Miss M. Geddes*. Margaret Sarah Geddes (1793-1872), afterwards Mrs. William Carpenter, portrait painter.  
*B. Barker*. Benjamin Barker (1776-1838), landscape painter.  
*T. C. Hofland*. Thomas Christopher Hofland (1777-1843), landscape painter.  
 His 'Storm off Scarborough' (noticed by Hazlitt) gained the British Institution prize.  
*D. Cox*. David Cox (1783-1859), the landscape painter in water-colours, whose merits went largely unrecognised during his lifetime.  
*Havell*. William Havell (1782-1857), landscape painter.  
*Nasmyth*. Patrick Nasmyth (1787-1831), landscape painter.  
*James Ward*, R.A. (1769-1850), engraver and painter. His *Conversations with Northcote* (ed. E. Fletcher), were published in 1901.  
*The late Mr. Valentine Green*. (1759-1813), engraver, writer, and keeper of the British Institution from 1805 until his death.  
*G. Garrard*. George Garrard, A.R.A. (1760-1826).

### ROYAL ACADEMY (1814)

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings: Second Series*.

PAGE

17. 'Pleased with itself [thyself],' etc. Goldsmith, *The Traveller*, 242.  
 'Reformed this indifferently,' etc. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 41.  
*Mr. Dawe*. George Dawe (1781-1829), portrait painter and mezzotint engraver, elected R.A. in this year, as readers of Lamb's letters will remember.  
*Halls*. John James Halls, portrait painter, died 1834.
18. *Bigg*. William Redmore Bigg (1755-1838), R.A. 1814.  
*West*. Benjamin West. Cf. *ante*, p. 13.  
*Lawrence*. Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), knighted 1815, P.R.A. in succession to West. According to Miss Mitford (letter of December 28, 1818) the immediate occasion of Hazlitt's dismissal from the *Morning Chronicle* is to be found in this passage. He was 'turned off,' she says, for 'a very masterly but damaging critique on Sir Thomas Lawrence, whom Mr. Perry, as one whom he visited and was being painted by, chose to have praised.' (L'Estrange, *Life*, 1870, II. 48.) The newspaper of two days later (May 5) contains the paragraph: 'We by no means agree with the observations of our Correspondent on the Portrait of Lord Castlereagh, in which the Critic seems to have mixed the ebullitions of party spirit with his ideas of characteristic resemblance. Politics have nothing to do with the Fine Arts. It is universally agreed, that one of the best Portraits in the Exhibition, if not the very best, in every essential point of the art, is that of Lord Castlereagh. The likeness is perfect. It has no meretricious ornament, and the ease of the attitude, the simplicity of the composition, and tone of colouring, all recommend it as a *chef d'œuvre*.' A replica of the portrait in question now hangs in the Foreign Office.  
*One of the finest we have ever seen*. Hazlitt had been looking down on it, of course, for more than a year from his place in the Press Gallery. Elsewhere he pays Lord Castlereagh the compliment of admitting him 'a noble mask of a face (not well filled up in the expression, which is relaxed and dormant), with a fine person and manner.' ('On Thought and Action,' vol. VIII, p. 109.)  
*R. Reinagle*. Ramsay Richard Reinagle (1775-1862), portrait, landscape, and animal painter, son of Philip Reinagle, below.  
*Mr. Thomson*. Henry Thomson, R.A. (1773-1843).

## NOTES

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18. *P. Reinagle*. Animal and landscape painter (1749-1833).  
*Divine lines from Spencer*. 'With him came Hope in rank, a handsome maid,'  
 etc., *Faerie Queene*, III. 12. 13, the whole stanza a favourite with Hazlitt.  
*T. Stothard*. Painter and book illustrator (1755-1834).  
*A. Cooper*. Cf. *ante*, p. 16.  
*Owen*. Cf. *ante*, p. 15.  
*A great authority*. Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his third *Discourse* particularly.  
*T. Phillips*. Thomas Phillips, R.A. (1770-1845), whose two portraits of Byron,  
 here making their first appearance, are well known. The first is in the National  
 Portrait Gallery; the second, painted for John Murray and engraved in line  
 by Robert Graves, is probably the most popular portrait of the poet.
19. 'Barbered ten times o'er.' *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. 2. 229.  
*Dido and Æneas*. Now in the National Gallery.  
*Collins*. Cf. *ante*, p. 14.  
*J. Wilson*. John Wilson (1774-1855), chiefly known for his marine subjects.  
*Nasmyth*. Cf. *ante*, p. 16.  
*Rev. R. Lancaster*. An honorary exhibitor of landscapes at the Academy from  
 1800 to 1827.

### MR. HAYDON'S SOLOMON

Unsigned. First reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms on Art* (1843-4).

### PAGE

19. *Glover*. John Glover, landscape painter in water-colours (1767-1849). He  
 was President of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours in 1815, and was one  
 of the founders of the Society of British Artists in 1824.  
*Cristall*. Joshua Cristall (1767-1847), china-dealer's apprentice in Rotherhithe,  
 later President of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours.  
*De Wint*. Peter de Wint (1784-1849), of Dutch extraction and Staffordshire  
 birth, a pupil of John Raphael Smith. His subjects are chiefly from the flat  
 lands of Lincolnshire.  
*Mr. Richter*. Henry James Richter (1772-1857), an exhibitor at the Water-  
 Colour Society from 1813 onwards.
20. *Disjecta [disjecti] membra poetæ*. Horace, *Satires*, I. 4.

### BRITISH INSTITUTION: HOGARTH, WILSON, ETC.

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings: Second Series*.

### PAGE

22. 'Instinct in every part.' Cf. 'Instinct through all proportions low and high,'  
*Paradise Lost*, XI. 558.  
 Note. *An admirable essay*. Lamb's, of course, 'On the Genius and Character  
 of Hogarth.'  
 'Die of a rose,' etc. Pope, *Essay on Man*, I. 200.
23. 'Great vulgar and the small.' Cowley, *Horatian Odes*, III. 1.
24. *Original composition*. The rest of the 'Fine Arts' article in the newspaper is  
 without distinguishing mark but is not by Hazlitt.

## ART CRITICISM

### WILSON'S LANDSCAPES AT THE BRITISH INSTITUTION

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

PAGE

25. 'A buoy,' etc. *King Lear*, iv. 6. 19.  
 27. 'Resembling a goose-pye.' Swift, *Vanburgh's House*, 104.  
 Note. 'Silly shepherds,' etc. Cf. Milton, *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*,  
 The Hymn, St. viii.  
 28. 'While universal Pan,' etc. *Paradise Lost*, iv. 266-8.  
 Note. An elegant and beautiful description of Claude. See ante, p. 7.

### MR. WEST'S PICTURE OF CHRIST REJECTED

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings: Second Series*.

Crabb Robinson has an entry on the subject of this article, under date July 4 : 'Took early tea with Flaxman, to whom I read an admirable criticism by Hazlitt on West's picture of the Rejection of Christ. A bitter and severe but most excellent performance. Flaxman was constrained to admit the high talent of the criticism, though he was unaffectedly pained by its severity.' Sadler's edition of the *Diary* (1869, i. 433.)

PAGE

28. *British Gallery*. 'That is, the loan exhibition at the British Institution, in Pall Mall, already noticed by Hazlitt (ante, pp. 21-24).  
 29. *Mr. Westall's Gallery*. Richard Westall, R.A. (1765-1836), historical painter, held an exhibition of his works this year at his house in Upper Charlotte Street, Soho.  
 'More indifferently.' Unidentified.  
 'Insinuate the plot.' Duke of Buckingham, *The Rehearsal*, Act i. Scene 2.  
 30. 'Amen sticks in our throats.' *Macbeth*, ii. 2. 31.  
 'That seem'd another morn,' etc. *Paradise Lost*, v. 310.  
 'Snatch a grace,' etc. Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, 153.  
 31. *Sir Joshua Reynolds lays it down*. See his Fourth and Eleventh Discourses.  
 'If we love not our brother,' etc. 1 *John*, iv. 20.  
 One of these 'Epic' compositions. Cf. vol. xi., note to p. 285.  
 'So should his anticipation,' etc. *Hamlet*, ii. 2. 304.  
 'Like a sick girl.' *Julius Cæsar*, i. 2. 198.  
 32. *Belle Assemblée*. *La Belle Assemblée; or Bell's Court and Fashionable Magazine*. London, 1806 seq.  
 'Our maid's aunt of Brentford.' *Merry Wives*, iv. 2. 179.  
 Old woman in *Fontaine*. Fable of the Old Woman and Her Two Servants.  
 'Made of penetrable stuff.' *Hamlet*, iii. 4. 36.  
 'Power of love sublime.' A Wordsworthian recollection, perhaps, 'He knows who gave that love sublime,' *Fidelity*, 63.  
 33. *Falstaff could not boast*. Cf. 2 *Henry IV*, Act iii. Scene 2.

### ON GAINSBOROUGH'S PICTURES

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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34. *A Portrait of a Youth*. The famous 'Blue Boy' belonging to the Duke of Westminster, painted in 1779.  
*Portrait of Garrick*. Painted in 1776, and now at the Stratford-on-Avon Museum.

## NOTES

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35. '*Distilled books*,' etc. Bacon, *Essays* ('Of Studies').  
     '*I to Hercules*.' *Hamlet*, 1. 2. 153.  
     *Cottage Children*. '*Rustic Children*,' now in the National Gallery.  
 36. *A Shepberd Boy in a Storm*. Cf. *Conversations of Northcote* (vol. xi. p. 291).  
 37. Note. *Two Spanisb Beggar Boys*. In the Dulwich Gallery. See vol. x. p. 25.

### FINE ARTS. WHETHER THEY ARE PROMOTED BY ACADEMIES AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Unsigned. First reprinted by W. C. Hazlitt in *Essays on the Fine Arts* (1873).

### PAGE

39. '*The last of those bright clouds*,' etc. *The Excursion*, vii. 1014-16.  
     *Constrained by mastery*. Cf. vol. iv., note to p. 151.  
     '*Spread its light wings*,' etc. Pope, *Eloisa to Abelard*, 74.  
     *A miniature of Lady Montagu*. Jane Margaret, daughter of Archibald, first  
     Lord Douglas, who married Lord Montagu (third son of the Duke of Buccleuch)  
     in 1804, is presumably the lady intended. I have not identified the miniature  
     referred to by Hazlitt.  
 40. *De Piles or Du Fresnoy*. Roger de Piles (1635-1709), painter and writer on art;  
     Charles Alphonse Du Fresnoy (1611-65), French painter and writer of a poem  
     on the art of painting.  
     *The venerable president*. Benjamin West. See above, note to p. 13.  
     *A cotemporary critic*. Hazlitt himself, of course. See *ante*, p. 5.

### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

Unsigned. First reprinted as above

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41. Note. '*Statesman, chemist*,' etc. Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, 1. 550.  
 42. *He becomes impatient and dissatisfied with his own attempts*. Hazlitt's case. Cf.  
     the essay, '*English Students at Rome*' (vol. xvii. p. 139).  
 45. *A celebrated painter*. ? Bartolommeo Schidone (1560-1616), whose '*The*  
     *Virgin Teaching the Infant Christ to Read*' was exhibited at the Orleans  
     Gallery.  
 46. '*And fools rush in*,' etc. Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, iii. 66.  
     '*Pleased with itself*,' etc. Goldsmith, *The Traveller*, 42.  
 47. '*A Guido from a Daub*.' Unidentified  
     *Rapbael*, and——. West, no doubt.

### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

A reply to the letter of '*A Student of the Royal Academy*' in *The Champion* of  
 September 25. First reprinted as above.

### PAGE

49. *The person who said*. The poet Young: '*He that imitates the divine Iliad does*  
     *not imitate Homer*. . . . *Imitate, but imitate not the composition, but the*  
     *man*.' *Conjectures on Original Composition in a Letter to the Author of Sir*  
     *Charles Grandison*, 1759 (*Works*, 1844, ii. 554).  
 50. '*Like a tall bully*,' etc. Pope, *Moral Essays*, iii. 338.  
     *Tattle in Love for Love*. Congreve's comedy, 1695.  
     *Bysbe's Art of Poetry*. Edward Byshe (fl. 1712), whose *Art of English Poetry* was  
     published in 1702.

# ART CRITICISM

## CHARACTER OF SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

Unsigned. First reprinted in *Essays on the Fine Arts* (1873).

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52. 'Alone give value and dignity to it.' Cf. Lamb's 'Essay on the Genius and Character of Hogarth' (ed. Lucas, 1912, i. 93), where the words are quoted from Barry's *Account of a Series of Pictures in the Great Room of the Society of Arts*.  
*Hudson*. Thomas Hudson (1701-79), one of the most fashionable portrait painters of his day, the master of Sir Joshua Reynolds.  
*Richardson*. Jonathan Richardson (1665-1745), portrait painter and writer on art. Cf. vol. viii. p. 10 and note.  
*Coypel*. Charles Antoine Coypel (1694-1752) was Director of the Academy from 1747.
53. *It has been well observed*. Hazlitt may be summarising his own views, as expressed in the papers, 'Whether the Fine Arts are Promoted,' etc. Cf. the following paper, 'On Genius and Originality'; and see (particularly) 'Originality' written for *The Atlas* in 1830 (vol. xx.).  
*Nature* . . . puts him out. Fuseli's complaint. See vol. xii. p. 94 and note.
54. 'No mark or likelihood.' 1 *King Henry IV.*, iii. 2. 45.
55. *Mr. Tomkins, the penman*. Cf. vol. viii. pp. 213-14.  
*Mrs. Robinson*. Mary Robinson (1758-1800), actress, and mistress of George, Prince of Wales, later George iv.  
*Mrs. Billington*. Elizabeth Billington (1768-1818), one of the greatest of English singers, of Saxon birth.  
*The only celebrated person of this period whom we have seen*. Hazlitt's opportunities of seeing Sheridan (who died July 7, 1816), both in the House of Commons and out of it, were, of course, many. He refers elsewhere ('On the Shyness of Scholars,' vol. xvii. p. 262) to his 'purple nose and flashing eye.' See also his *Atlas* paper, 'The Exclusionists in Taste,' in vol. xx.
56. *The late Lady Mount-Joy*. Died 1814, wife of the second Viscount Mountjoy, who was created first Earl Blessington in 1818.  
*'The winds of heaven,' etc.* *Hamlet*, i. 2. 141.
57. 'The soft precision of the clear Vandyke.' Unidentified.
58. *Kitty Fisher*. Catherine Maria Fisher (d. 1767), the courtesan.
59. 'Calling each by name,' etc. Hazlitt here and in the following quotation seems to be recalling Cary's version, first published in 1805-6 and republished with his complete translation in 1814. Cf. *Inferno*, xxxiii. 72-3, and xxxii. 128 and xxxiii. i. Boyd's version differs considerably. See vol. x., note to p. 218, and vol. xvi. note to p. 42.  
*Dr. Warton* . . . has related. See Warton's *The History of English Poetry*, 1781, ii. 249-51.  
*Burke* . . . that fine description. The Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts.  
*'Why stands Macbeth,' etc.* *Macbeth*, iv. i. 126.
60. Note. Alexander Day (1772-1841), the miniaturist. Cf. *Conversations of Northcote* (vol. xi. p. 201).
61. *The Marquis of Granby*. John Manners, Marquis of Granby (1721-70), the successful British general in the Seven Years' War, whose portrait was twice painted by Reynolds.  
*Strange*. Sir Robert Strange (1721-92), who fought for the Stuarts at Culloden and elsewhere, one of the greatest of line engravers.  
*In conspicuous situations*. On inn signs, that is.

## NOTES

### INTRODUCTION TO AN ACCOUNT OF SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS'S DISCOURSES

Signed 'W. H.' First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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62. Note. Cf. *ante*, p. 52 and note.

63. *To embrace a cloud for a Goddess.* Cf. vol. vii. p. 16 and note.

### ON GENIUS AND ORIGINALITY

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65. *If Raphael, for instance, had only copied, etc.* See Reynolds's Twelfth Discourse.

66. 'Sole sitting,' etc. Wordsworth, *Poems on the Naming of Places*, iv.

'Beauty, rendered still more beautiful.' Cf.

'—And he would gaze till it became  
Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain  
The beauty, still more beauteous.'

Wordsworth, *Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree*, 35-7.

'Thrice happy fields,' etc. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, iii. 569-70.

67. 'The tender mercies.' 'The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.' *Proverbs*, xii. 10.

*That fine landscape in the Louvre.* 'The Rainbow.' Cf. vol. x. p. 110.

*The one which was given on another occasion.* I have not identified the occasion.

'Wandering through dry places,' etc. Cf. *S. Matthew*, xii. 43.

Note. Claude's *Liber Veritatis*, now in the possession of the Duke of Devonshire, is not a collection of original sketches, but a record of his pictures with inscriptions showing for whom they were painted.

68. *We have said so much in another place.* In previous 'Fine Arts' papers in *The Champion*, he means. Cf. *ante*, pp. 42-5, 56, etc.

'Lose more men of talents,' etc. Unidentified.

69. 'Human face divine.' *Paradise Lost*, iii. 44.

70. *Says Luther.* Cf. vol. xiii. p. 192 and note.

### ON THE IMITATION OF NATURE

Signed 'W. H.' First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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72. *Denner.* Cf. vol. viii. p. 133 and note.

74. *A telegraphic machinery.* 'Invented by Chappe in France in 1792, consisting of an upright post with movable arms, the signals being made by various positions of the arms according to a pre-arranged code.' (*N.E.D.*).

75. 'Blinking Sam.' See Mrs. Piozzi's *Anecdotes* (*Johnsonian Miscellanies*, ed. G. B. Hill, i. 313).

*The scene between Wilkes and Johnson.* See Boswell, *Life* (ed. G. B. Hill, iii. 64-69).

*The little episode of Goldsmith.* *Ibid.*

*The common portrait of Oliver Cromwell.* Cf. vol. viii. p. 338 and note.

76. *The common one reading.* Reynolds painted Johnson on four occasions—in 1756, 1770, 1773, and 1778 ('Blinking Sam'). The third portrait, now in the National Gallery, is presumably that intended. It does not, however, show Johnson reading.

*Titian's portraits . . . in the Louvre.* Cf. vol. x., note to p. 122.

# ART CRITICISM

## ON THE IDEAL

Signed 'W. H.' First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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77. 'Might ascend,' etc. Henry V., Prologue.  
 78. *The fog and haze.* Cf. vol. xii. p. 253 and note.  
 'Obscurity her curtain,' etc. Sneddy Davies, To the Honourable and Reverend F. C. (Dodsley, vi. 138).  
*The ideal.* Cf. Hazlitt's *Atlas* paper of this title, in vol. xx.  
 79. *As he himself observes.* See *Joseph Andrews*, Book III. Chap. 1.  
 80. *Dr. Johnson . . . affirms.* Cf. *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, Preface (vol. iv. p. 176).  
 'Whose end,' etc. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 23.  
*The late Mr. Barry . . . speaks thus.* In his 'Observations on Different Works of Art in France and Italy' (*Works*, 1809, II. 10).  
 82. *We have heard it observed.* By Coleridge. Cf. vol. xvi. p. 199 and note.  
 83. *The Greek face . . . the African.* Cf. 'On Beauty' (vol. iv. p. 69).  
 84. *An eminent critic.* Jeffrey, no doubt.

## LUCIEN BUONAPARTE'S COLLECTION, ETC.

Signed 'W. H.' First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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84. *Exposed in this country for sale.* Following the return of the owner to Italy at the peace of 1814. I do not find a contemporary record of the sale.  
 'Vile durance.' This phrase, or its inversion, appears to come originally from Kenrick's *Falstaff's Wedding* (1766), Act 1. Scene 2. Hazlitt may be using it after Burke or Burns.  
 'The mistress or the saint.' Cf. Goldsmith, *The Traveller*, 152.  
*Jocunda.* The portrait of Mona Lisa, wife of Francesco del Giocondo.  
 86. *The author of Charlemagne.* *Charlemagne, ou l'Eglise Delivrée*, reviewed by Hazlitt in the previous December. See vol. xix.  
 'Laborious foolery.' Cf. vol. xi. note to p. 55.  
 87. 'Come, then, the colours,' etc. Pope, *Moral Essays*, II. 17-20.  
*Watteau.* Antoine Watteau (1684-1721).  
*Guerin.* Pierre Narcisse Guérin (1774-1833). The picture referred to is now in the Louvre.  
 Note. Cf. 'On Means and Ends' (vol. xvii. p. 217).  
 89. *The Deluge by Girodet.* This picture of Anne Louis Girodet's (1767-1824) is in the Louvre.  
*Lefebvre.* Hazlitt presumably refers to Robert Le Fèvre's (1756-1830) portrait of Napoleon now in the Gallery at Versailles.

## BRITISH INSTITUTION (1815)

Signed 'W. H.' First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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90. *C. L. Eastlake.* Charles Lock Eastlake (1793-1865), elected President of the Royal Academy and knighted in 1850; Director of the National Gallery from 1855.  
 'Antique Roman.' *Hamlet*, v. 2. 352.  
*A hint from a bigb quarter.* Hazlitt presumably refers to the fact that Canning had not been in office since his quarrel with Castlereagh in 1809.

## NOTES

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91. 'A great book is a great evil.' A saying of Voltaire's. Cf. vol. v. p. 114.  
*Mr. Bird.* Cf. *ante*, p. 12.  
*'It is place,' etc.* *Cymbeline*, III. 3. 13.
92. *G. Hayter.* George (afterwards Sir George) Hayter (1792-1871). His 'Ezra' gained a prize of £200.  
*Mr. Harlowe's Hubert and Arthur.* By George Henry Harlow (1787-1819), a pupil of Sir Thomas Lawrence.  
*'Deep scars,' etc.* *Paradise Lost*, I. 601.  
*Miss Geddes.* Margaret Sarah Geddes (1793-1872), better known as Mrs. Carpenter, and a portrait painter.  
*Chalon.* Alfred Edward Chalon (1781-1860).
93. *Burnetts, etc.* James M. Burnet (1788-1816) and John Burnet (1784-1868); Anthony Vandyke Copley Fielding (1787-1855); Thomas Christopher Hoffand (1777-1843); John Glover (1767-1849). Both the Nasmyths, Alexander (1758-1840) and Peter (1787-1831), were represented at the Exhibition.  
*W. Collins.* Cf. *ante*, pp. 13, 19.  
*Bone.* Robert Trewick Bone (1790-1840).
94. *H. Howard.* Henry Howard (1769-1847).  
*H. Singleton.* Henry Singleton (1766-1839).  
*A painting on a tea-board.* Cf. vol. x. p. 22 and note.  
*P. H. Rogers.* Philip Hutchins Rogers (1794-1853).  
*J. Wilson.* John Wilson (1774-1855).
95. *The ablest landscape painter of the present day.* Turner. Cf. *ante*, p. 110, and vol. iv., note to p. 76.  
*B. Barker.* Benjamin Barker (1776-1838).  
*Ab. Cooper.* Cf. *ante*, pp. 16, 18.  
*A picture of this kind by Murillo.* Cf. *ante*, p. 37 and note.  
*J. Stark.* James Stark (1794-1859).  
*P. Dewint.* Peter De Wint (1784-1849).
96. *A. Sauerweide.* Alexander Sauerweid (1782-1844).  
*'War is a game,' etc.* Cowper, *The Task*, v. 187-8.

## ON MR. WILKIE'S PICTURES

Signed 'W. H.' First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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96. *Archbishop Herring's letters.* Cf. vol. v. (*Lectures on the English Poets*), p. 141 and note.
97. *The biggest authority on art.* From this point the rest of the essay was incorporated in the Lecture on Hogarth. See vol. VIII. pp. 139-41.
98. *'To shew vice [virtue],' etc.* *Hamlet*, III. 2. 25.  
*'The very error,' etc.* Cf. 'It is the very error of the moon.' *Othello*, v. 2. 109.
99. *'Your lungs begin to crow,' etc.* Cf. *As You Like It*, II. 7. 30.

## THE ELGIN MARBLES

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover. The first of two articles ('Literary Notices,' Nos. ii and iii), contributed by Hazlitt to *The Examiner* of June 16 and 30. The second article was incorporated in his later *London Magazine* papers 'On the Elgin Marbles' (*ante*, pp. 145 *et seq.*).

## ART CRITICISM

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102. 'There stood the statue,' etc. Thompson, *The Seasons*, Summer, 1347.  
 'There was old Proteus,' etc. Wordsworth, Sonnet, 'The World is too much with us.'  
 103. *To strut and fret.* Cf. *Macbeth*, v. 5. 25.  
*Another article.* That of June 30 (see introductory note, above, and *post*, notes to pp. 145-6).

### THE CATALOGUE RAISONNÉ OF THE BRITISH INSTITUTION

Unsigned. First reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms on Art* (1843-4). The first of three articles ('Literary Notices,' Nos. xv, xvi, and xvii) contributed by Hazlitt to *The Examiner* of November 3, 10 and 17. The second and third articles were reprinted by him in *The Round Table*, with omissions which are recorded in the notes. See vol. iv. pp. 140 *et seq.*

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104. 'Damned in a fair face.' Cf. 'Damned in a fair wife.' *Othello*, I. I. 21.  
*Madame de —.* Staël.  
 'Lived in the rainbow,' etc. *Comus*, 298.  
 106. 'Sent to their account,' etc. *Hamlet*, I. 5. 78.  
*Pingo in eternitatem.* Cf. vol. xi. note to p. 36.  
 107. 'To the Jews a stumbling-block,' etc. I *Corinthians*, I. 23.  
 'A quantity of barren spectators.' *Hamlet*, III. 2. 46.  
 'Hold the mirror up to nature.' *Ibid.*, III. 2. 26.  
 'The glass of fashion,' etc. *Ibid.*, III. 1. 161.  
 'Numbers without number.' *Paradise Lost*, III. 346.  
 108. *When Sir Thomas Lawrence painted Lord Castlereagh.* For the allusions in this passage see *ante*, note to p. 18.  
*Lavater.* Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741-1801), the student of physiognomy.  
 See *The Life of Holcroft* (vol. III. p. 115).  
*Spurzheim.* See *The Plain Speaker*, vol. VII. pp. 17 *et seq.*, and 137 *et seq.*  
*Letter to Mon Prince.* Cf. *Political Essays* (vol. VII. p. 134 and note).  
*Tacitus had drawn him before.* I have not identified the portrait to which Hazlitt refers.  
 'With most admired disorder.' *Macbeth*, III. 4. 110.  
 109. 'Her glorious light.' Unidentified.  
*They owe no allegiance to the elements.* Cf. vol. IV. note to p. 112.  
 'To let I dare not,' etc. *Macbeth*, I. 7. 45.  
 'Service sweat for duty,' etc. *As You Like It*, II. 3. 58.  
 10. 'This, this is the unkindest,' etc. Cf. *Julius Caesar*, III. 2. 187.  
 'Own gained knowledge.' *Othello*, I. 3. 390.  
 'That's a feeling disputation.' I *King Henry IV.*, III. 1. 206.  
 11. 'To some men their graces,' etc. *As You Like It*, II. 3. 11.  
*The art and their country.* For the continuation of Hazlitt's argument against the Catalogue the reader will turn to *The Round Table* (see introductory note, above). Two additions to the notes to that volume are recorded here.  
 The second of the *Examiner* articles ends with 'encouragement of the Fine Arts?' (vol. IV. p. 147). A letter follows in the newspaper signed 'H. R.', protesting against being pointed out as the author of the *Catalogue Raisonné*, to which the following paragraph (evidently by Hazlitt) is added in square brackets:  
 'We insert the above letter as in duty bound; for it is a sad thing to labour under the imputation of being the author of the Catalogue—"that deed

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without a name." <sup>1</sup> But we hardly know how to reply to our Correspondent, unless by repeating what Mr. Brumell said of the Regent—"Who is our fat friend?" We do not know his person or address, or by what marks he identifies himself with our description of him—Whether he answers to his name as a cheese-curd, or a piece of whitleather, or as a Shrewsbury Cake; or as a stocking, or a joint-stool; or as a little round man, or as a fair squab man? If he claims any or all of these marks as his property, he is welcome to them. We shall believe him. We shall also believe him, when he says he is not the anonymous author of the *Catalogue Raisonné*; and in that case, we can have no farther fault to find with him, even though he were the beautiful Albino.

For the authorship of the *Catalogue*, see vol. iv., note to p. 140.

The third of the *Examiner* articles proceeds as in *The Round Table* with the additions recorded in the notes. The omitted passage referred to at p. 150 is as follows:

'We concluded our last with some remarks on Claude's landscapes. We shall return to them here; and we would ask those who have seen them at the British Institution, "Is the general effect in his pictures injured by the details?"' Here Hazlitt reproduces his concluding paragraph on Claude from 'Wilson's Landscapes at the British Institution,' *ante*, p. 28, ending with 'What landscape-painter does not feel this of Claude?' He continues:

'It seems the author of the *Catalogue Raisonné* does not; for he thus speaks of him:—

"*David Encamped.*—Claude. Rev. W. H. Carr:—If it were not for the horrible composition of this landscape—the tasteless hole in the wall—the tents and daddy-long-legs, whom Mr. Carr has christened King David, we should be greatly offended by its present obtrusion on the public; as it is, we are bound to suppose the possessor sees deeper into the mill-stone than ourselves; and if it were politic, could thoroughly explain the matter to our satisfaction. *Be this as it may, we cannot resist expressing our regret at the absence of Claude Gillee's Muses.—The Public in general merely know, by tradition, that this painter was a pastry-cook: bad this delectable composition to which we now allude been brought forward, they would have had the evidence of his practice to confirm it. It is said to represent Mount Parnassus; and no one, who for a moment has seen the picture, can entertain the smallest doubt of its having been taken from one of his own Plateaux. The figures have all the character and drawing which they might be expected to derive from a species of twelfth-cake casts. The swans are of the truest wax-shapes, while the water bears every mark of being done from something as right-earnest as that at Sadler's Wells, and the Prince's Fête of 1814.*"

'This is the way in which the Catalogue-writer aids and abets the Royal Academy in the promotion and encouragement of the Fine Arts in this country. Now, what if we were to imitate him, and to say of the "ablest landscape-painter now living," that . . . No, we will not; we have blotted out the passage after we had written it—Because it would be bad wit, bad manners, and bad reasoning. Yet we dare be sworn it is as good wit, as good manners, and as good reasoning as the wittiest, the most gentlemanly, and the most rational passage in the *Catalogue Raisonné*. Suppose we were to put forth voluntarily such a criticism on one of Mr. Turner's landscapes? What then? we should do a great injustice to an able and ingenious man, and disgrace ourselves: but we should not hurt a sentiment, we should not mar a principle, we should not invade the sanctuary of Art. Mr. Turner's pictures

<sup>1</sup> *Macbeth*, iv. 1. 49.

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have not, like Claude's, become a sentiment in the heart of Europe; his fame has not been stamped and rendered sacred by the hand of time. Perhaps it never will.<sup>1</sup>

'We have only another word to add on this very lowest of all subjects. The writer calls in the cant of morality to his aid. He was quite shocked to find himself in the company of some female relations, vis-à-vis with a naked figure of Annibal Caracci's. Yet he thinks the Elgin Marbles likely to raise the morals of the country to a high pitch of refinement. Good. The fellow is a hypocrite too.'

### FINE ARTS

For particulars regarding the composition of this article, contributed under the signature 'Z' to the first volume (1816) of the Supplement to the fourth and fifth editions of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1816-24), see the present editor's *Life* (pp. 197-9). The article is an extremely interesting instance of Hazlitt's method of reproducing the expression of his ideas rather than of writing them again in other words, and he found nearly the whole of the material he considered necessary ready to his hand in the series of papers on the 'Fine Arts' he had contributed to *The Champion*. The first part only of the article, consisting of his introductory remarks and examination of the foreign schools, is given in the present text, the concluding portion dealing with the progress of art in this country being a close reproduction of articles already printed. His connecting passages are reproduced below. The complete article, after doing duty in the Supplement, was incorporated in the uniform issue of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (the 7th) in 1842. In 1838 it had formed part of the volume *Painting, and the Fine Arts: Being the Articles under those heads contributed to the seventh edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica*, by B. R. Haydon, Esq. and William Hazlitt, Esq., published by Adam and Charles Black, Edinburgh, in a series of 'Encyclopædia Britannica Treatises.' It was also reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *Literary Remains* (1836) and *Criticisms on Art* (1843-4).

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- 113. *In general, then, we would be understood.* From this point to the end of the section Hazlitt is drawing on his *Champion* paper, 'On the Ideal' (*ante*, pp. 80-82).
- 116. *The interest which the latter excite.* From this point to the end of the paragraph Hazlitt is drawing on his *Champion* paper, 'On Genius and Originality' (*ante*, pp. 68-9).
- 117. *We find, in his female heads.* From this point to the end of the paragraph Hazlitt is drawing on his *Champion* paper, 'Lucien Buonaparte's Collection' (*ante*, p. 84).
- 120. *Titian's portraits are the most historical ever painted.* At this point Hazlitt is drawing on a passage of his *Champion* paper, 'On the Imitation of Nature' (*ante*, p. 76).
- 122. *His portraits, mostly of English women.* At this point Hazlitt is drawing on his *Champion* paper, 'Character of Sir Joshua Reynolds' (*ante*, p. 56).  
'Bright with excessive darkness.'

Cf. 'dark with excessive bright.'

*Paradise Lost*, III. 380.

'Mystery and silence bung upon his pencil.' Unidentified.

<sup>1</sup> 'In fact, Mr. T.'s landscapes are nothing but stained water-colour drawings, loaded with oil-colour.'

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123. 'They are of the earth, earthy.' 1 Corinthians, xv. 47.

*Vanderneer*. Probably Eglon Hendrik Van der Neer (1643-1703), of Amsterdam, is meant, since his pictures are characterised by their elaborate finish. His father, Aert Van der Neer (1603-77), painted moonlight and winter scenes.

124. The remainder of the article in the *Encyclopædia* is based on articles which have already been reproduced (see introductory note), and is here printed only in summary. It proceeds:

'PROGRESS OF ART IN BRITAIN.—We come now to speak of the progress of Art in our own Country,—of its present state,—and the means proposed for advancing it to still higher perfection.

'HOGARTH. We shall speak first of Hogarth, both as he is the first name in the order of time that we have to boast of, and as he is the greatest comic painter of any age or country. His pictures are not imitations of still life, or mere transcripts of individual scenes or customs; but powerful moral satires, exposing vice and folly in their most ludicrous points of view, and with a profound insight into the weak sides of character and manners, in all their tendencies, combinations, and contrasts. There is not a single picture of his, containing a representation of merely natural or domestic scenery. His object is not so much "to hold the mirror up to nature," as "to show vice her own feature, scorn her own image." Folly is there seen at the height—the moon is at the full—it is the very error of the time. There is a perpetual collision of eccentricities, a tilt and tournament of absurdities, pampered into all sorts of affectation, airy, extravagant, and ostentatious! Yet he is as little a caricaturist as he is a painter of still life. Criticism has not done him justice, though public opinion has. His works have received a sanction,' etc., the section proceeding as the passage, *ante*, p. 21 (line seven from bottom) to 'great vulgar and the small' at the top of p. 23. The section on Hogarth concludes:

'To this it must be added, that he was as great a master of passion as of humour. He succeeded in low tragedy, as much as in low or genteel comedy, and had an absolute power in moving the affections and rending the hearts of the spectators, by depicting the effects of the most dreadful calamities of human life, on common minds and common countenances. Of this, the *Rake's Progress*, particularly the Bedlam scene, and many others, are unanswerable proofs. Hogarth's merits, as a mere artist, are not confined to his prints. In general, indeed, this is the case. But when he chose to take pains, he could add the delicacies of execution and colouring in the highest degree to those of character and composition; as is evident in his series of pictures, all equally well painted, of the *Marriage à la Mode*, exhibited lately at the British Institution.

'WILSON.—We shall next speak of Wilson, whose pictures may be divided into three classes,' etc. The whole of the *Champion* paper, with the omission of two paragraphs, is reproduced (*ante*, pp. 24-8).

'GAINSBOROUGH.—We have heard an anecdote connected with the reputation,' etc. The section consists of the *Champion* article (*ante*, pp. 34-7), with omissions.

'SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.—The authority of Sir Joshua Reynolds,' etc. The articles 'Character of Sir Joshua Reynolds' are reproduced, with some compression (*ante*, pp. 51-60). The section proceeds:

'There is a striking similarity between Sir Joshua Reynolds's theory and his practice; and as each of these has been appealed to in support of the other, it is necessary that we should examine both. Sir Joshua's practice was generally confined to the illustration of that part of his theory which relates to the more

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immediate imitation of nature, and it is to what he says on this subject that we shall chiefly direct our observations at present.

‘He lays it down as a general and invariable rule, that “*the great style in art, and the most PERFECT IMITATION OF NATURE, consists in avoiding the details and peculiarities of particular objects.*” This sweeping principle he applies almost indiscriminately to *Portrait, History, and Landscape*; and he appears to have been led to the conclusion itself, from supposing the imitation of particulars to be inconsistent with general truth and effect. It appears to us, that the highest perfection of the art depends, not on separating but on uniting general truth and effect with individual distinctness and accuracy.

‘First, it is said that the great style in painting,’ etc. The article ‘On the Imitation of Nature’ is reproduced, *ante*, p. 70 (line six from bottom) to the words ‘a very tolerable fund of consolation on either side’ on p. 74.

The section concludes :

‘Much has been said of *historical portrait*; and we have no objection to this phrase, if properly understood. The giving historical truth to a portrait, means, then, the representing the individual under one consistent, probable, and striking view; or showing the different features, muscles, &c. in one action, and modified by one principle. A portrait thus painted may be said to be *historical*; that is, it carries internal evidence of truth and propriety with it; and the number of individual peculiarities, as long as they are true to nature, cannot lessen, but must add to the strength of the general impression.

‘It might be shown (if there were room in this place) that Sir Joshua has constructed his theory of the *ideal* in art, upon the same mistaken principle of the negation or abstraction of *particular nature*. The *ideal* is not a negative but a positive thing. The leaving out the details or peculiarities of an individual face does not make it one jot more ideal. To paint history, is to paint nature as answering to a general, predominant, or preconceived idea in the mind, of strength, beauty, action, passion, thought, &c.; but the way to do this is not to leave out the details, but to incorporate the general idea with the details;—that is, to show the same expression actuating and modifying every movement of the muscles, and the same character preserved consistently through every part of the body. Grandeur does not consist in omitting the parts, but in connecting all the parts into a whole, and in giving their combined and varied action: abstract truth or ideal perfection does not consist in rejecting the peculiarities of form, but in rejecting all those which are not consistent with the character intended to be given; and in following up the same *general idea* of softness, voluptuousness, strength, activity, or any combination of these through every ramification of the frame. But these modifications of form or expression can only be learnt from nature, and therefore the perfection of art must always be sought in nature. The ideal properly applies as much to the *idea* of ugliness, weakness, folly, meanness, vice, as of beauty, strength, wisdom, magnanimity, or virtue. The antique heads of fauns and satyrs, of Pan or Silenus, are quite as ideal as those of the Apollo or Bacchus; and Hogarth adhered to an idea of humour in his faces, as Raphael did to an idea of sentiment. But Raphael found the character of sentiment in nature as much as Hogarth did that of humour; otherwise neither of them would have given one or the other with such perfect truth, purity, force, and keeping. Sir Joshua Reynolds’s *ideal*, as consisting in a mere negation of individuality, bears just the same relation to real beauty or grandeur as caricature does to true comic character.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ‘This subject of the *Ideal* will be resumed, and more particularly enlarged upon, under that head.’

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'PRESENT STATE OF BRITISH ART.—It is owing either to a mistaken theory of elevated art, or to the want of models in nature, that the English are hitherto without any painter of serious historical subjects, who can be placed in the first rank of genius. Many of the pictures of modern artists have shown a capacity,' etc., as the *Morning Chronicle* article on the 'British Institution' (*ante*, pp. 10–12). After 'having rivalled the Italian painters in expression,' the section continues: 'Mr. West does not form an exception to, but a confirmation of, these general observations. His pictures have all that can be required,' etc., the *Champion* article, 'Mr. West's Picture of Christ Rejected' being drawn upon for two paragraphs (*ante*, pp. 30 and 33), the second concluding in the *Encyclopædia*: 'or raise the eyes in a very scientific manner. In fact, there is no want of art or learning in his pictures, but of nature and feeling.'

'MEANS OF PROMOTING THE FINE ARTS.—It is not long ago that an opinion was very general, that all that was wanting to the highest splendour and perfection of the arts in this country might be supplied by Academies and public institutions. We believe the most sanguine promoters of this scheme have at present relaxed their zeal. There are *three* ways in which Academies and public institutions may be supposed to promote the fine arts; either by furnishing the best models to the student; or by holding out immediate emolument and patronage; or by improving the public taste. We shall bestow a short consideration on the influence of each.

'First, a constant reference to the best models of art necessarily tends to enervate the mind, to intercept our view of nature, and to distract the attention by a variety of unattainable excellence. An intimate acquaintance with the works of the celebrated masters may indeed add to the indolent refinements of taste, but will never produce one work of original genius, one great artist. In proof of the general truth of this observation, we might cite the history of the progress and decay of art in all countries where it has flourished. It is a little extraordinary,' etc. A portion of the *Champion* article 'Whether the Fine Arts are Promoted by Academies and Public Institutions' of August 28, and the greater part of that of September 11 (to 'shallow smatterers in taste,' *ante*, pp. 39–46) form the remainder of the article.

## JAMES BARRY

Contributed under the signature 'Z' to the second volume (1817) of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* Supplement. See the present editor's *Life*, pp. 227–8.

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- 128. *Mr. Stewart.* James Stuart (1713–88), painter and architect. His work, *The Antiquities of Athens* (1762), is largely responsible for the imitations of Greek architecture in London.
- 130. *Mr. Hamilton.* Sir William Hamilton (1730–1803), archæologist and diplomatist. His wife was Emma Hart, the celebrated 'Nelson' Lady Hamilton.
- Count de Firmian.* Joseph, Count de Firmian (1716–82), Austrian diplomatist. He was appointed to Lombardy in 1759 and was practically ruler there. He has the reputation of having been a patron of art.
- 131. *Mr. Valentine Green* (1739–1813). Engraver, writer, and keeper of the British Institution from 1805 until his death.

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132. 'Whatever the band had done.' Boswell's *Johnson* (ed. G. B. Hill, vol. iv. p. 224).  
*Dr. Burney swimming in the Thames.* See vol. iv. *The Round Table*, p. 35 and note.
133. *The Orleans collection.* See vol. x., note to p. 9.

### WEST'S PICTURE OF DEATH ON THE PALE HORSE

Signed 'W. H.' The full title in the magazine is 'Remarks on Mr. West's Picture of Death on the Pale Horse and on his Descriptive Catalogue which accompanies it.' First reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms on Art* (1843-4).

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135. 'It sets on a quantity of barren spectators,' etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 46.  
 'High endeavour and the glad success.' Cowper, *The Task*, v. 901.
136. 'So shall my anticipation.' *Hamlet*, II. 2. 304.  
*Insinuates the plot.* Cf. ante, p. 29 and note.  
 'Spoken with authority and not as the scribes.' *S. Mark*, i. 22.
137. *Another enemy of the human race.* Cf. vol. VIII. p. 284.
138. *Make the still air cold.* Cf. vol. XII. p. 99.  
 'Grin horrible a ghastly smile.' *Paradise Lost*, II. 146.  
 'Monarch of the universal world [earth].' *Romeo and Juliet*, III. 2. 94.
139. *Multum abludivit imago.* Horace, *Sat.* II. 3. 320.

### HAYDON'S CHRIST'S AGONY IN THE GARDEN

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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142. *Matthews.* Charles Matthews (1776-1835), the comedian, whose famous 'At Homes' Hazlitt refers to.  
 'Sea, earth, and air.' Cf. 'And shot my being through earth, sea, and air.'  
 Coleridge, *France, An Ode*, 103.
143. *He bestrides his art, like a Colossus.* Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, I. 2. 135. Haydon was pleased with these words which he quoted in a letter to a friend extracted in Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *Four Generations of a Literary Family* (I. 234).  
 'Ample room,' etc. Gray, *The Bard*, 51.  
 'A band,' etc. Donne, *The Storm*, 3-4.  
*As it was said in the Edinburgh Review.* By Hazlitt himself, in his review of Farington's *Life of Reynolds* (vol. xvi. p. 209).
144. *We have seen two of the beads.* Cf. 'Pictures at Burleigh House' (vol. x. p. 67 and note).  
*The last of these is now removed.* By the success attending the exhibition of his 'Christ's Entry into Jerusalem,' the receipts from which, in London, Edinburgh and Glasgow, Haydon estimates at £3000 (*Autobiography*, intro. Huxley, I. 291). He hastens to add, however, that he was 'still deeply in debt' (*ibid.*, I. 293).

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### ON THE ELGIN MARBLES

Signed 'W. H.' First reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms on Art* (1843-4).

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145. 'Who to the life,' etc. Cowley, *To the Royal Society*.

*The Examiner* article begins with the quotation from Cowley and then proceeds before the paragraph beginning 'The true lesson,' etc., as follows:

'According to the account of Pliny, it does not appear certain that Phidias ever worked in marble. He mentions indeed a marble Venus at Rome, conjectured to be his; and another at Athens, without the walls, done by his scholar Alcamenes, to which Phidias was said to have put the last hand. His chief works, according to this historian, were the Olympian Jupiter, and the Minerva in the Parthenon, both in ivory: he executed other known works in brass. The words of Pliny, in speaking of Phidias, are remarkable:—"That the name of Phidias is illustrious among all the nations that have heard of the fame of the Olympian Jupiter, no one doubts; but in order that those may know that he is deservedly praised who have not even seen his works, we shall offer a few arguments, and those of his genius only; nor to this purpose shall we insist on the beauty of the Olympian Jupiter, nor on the magnitude of the Minerva at Athens, though it is twenty-six cubits in height, (about 35 feet) and is made of ivory and gold: but we shall refer to the shield, on which the battle of the Amazons is carved on the outer side; on the inside of the same is the fight of the Gods and Giants; and on the sandals that between the Lapithæ and Centaurs; so well did every part of that work display the powers of the art. Again, the Sculptures on the pedestal he called the Birth of Pandora: there are to be seen in number thirty Gods, the figure of Victory being particularly admirable: the learned also admire the figures of the serpent and the brazen sphinx, writhing under the spear. These things are mentioned, in passing, of an Artist never enough to be commended, that it may be seen that he shewed the same magnificence even in small things."—*Natural History*, Book xxxvi.

'It appears, by the above description, that Phidias did not make choice of the colossal height of this statue with a view to make size a substitute for grandeur; but in order that he might be able, among other things, to finish, fill up, and enrich every part as much as possible. Size assists grandeur in genuine art only by enabling the Artist to give a more perfect development to the parts of which the whole is composed. A miniature is inferior to a full-sized picture, not because it does not give the large and general outline, but because it does not give the smaller varieties and finer elements of nature. As a proof of this (if the thing were not self-evident), the copy of a good portrait will always make a highly-finished miniature, but the copy of a good miniature, if enlarged to the size of life, will make but a very vapid portrait. Some of our own Artists, who are fond of painting large figures, either misunderstand or misapply this principle. They make the whole figure gigantic, not that they may have room for nature, but for the motion of their brush, regarding the quantity of canvas they have to cover as an excuse for the slovenly and hasty manner in which they cover it; and thus in fact leave their pictures nothing at last but monstrous miniatures.

'We should hardly have ventured to mention this figure of five and thirty feet high, which might give an inordinate expansion to the ideas of our contemporaries, but that the labour and pains bestowed upon every part of it,—the thirty Gods carved on the pedestal, the battle of the Centaurs and Lapithæ

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on the sandals, would at once make their magnificent projects shrink into a nutshell, or bring them within the compass of reason.—We had another inducement for extracting Pliny's account of the Minerva of Phidias, which was, to check any inclination on the part of our students to infer from the Elgin Marbles, that the perfection of ancient Grecian art consisted in the imperfect state in which its earliest remains have come down to us; or to think that fragments are better than whole works, that the trunk is more valuable without the head, and that the grandeur of the antique consists in the ruin and decay into which it has fallen through time.'

'To learn her manner,' etc.

'Acknowledges with joy

His manner, and with rapture tastes His style.'

Cowper, *The Task*, III. 227-8.

146. *Which Sir Thomas Lawrence speaks of.* In his evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons on the Elgin Marbles, March 5, 1816. See Williams, *Life of Lawrence*, 1831, I. 401.

1. 7. from bottom. After 'is to us a mystery,' *The Examiner* article adds: 'Further, we are ready (for the benefit of the Fine Arts in this kingdom) to produce two casts from actual nature, which if they do not furnish practical proof of all that we have here advanced, we are willing to forfeit all that we are worth—a theory,' and proceeds as at foot of p. 149, the concluding paragraph on p. 150 reading: 'We shall conclude with expressing a hope, that the Elgin Marbles may not be made another national stop-gap between nature and art.' To this conclusion the following footnote is attached:

'In answer to some objections to what was said in a former article on the comparative propriety of removing these statues, we beg leave to put one question. It appears from the Report of the Committee, that the French Government were, in the year 1811, anxious to purchase the collection of Lord Elgin, who was then a prisoner in France. We ask then, supposing this to have been done, what would have become of it? Would not the Theseus and the Neptune have been solemnly sent back, like malefactors, "to the place from whence they came?"—Yes, to be sure.—The Rev. Dr. Philip Hunt, in the service of Lord Elgin, declares, in his evidence before the Committee, that no objection was made nor regret expressed by the inhabitants at the removal of the Marbles. In the notes to *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*,<sup>1</sup> we find the following extract of a letter from Dr. Clarke to Lord Byron:—"When the last of the Metopes was taken from the Parthenon, and in moving it, great part of the superstructure, with one of tryglyphs, was thrown down by the workmen whom Lord Elgin employed, the Disdar, who beheld the mischief done to the building, took his pipe from his mouth, dropped a tear, and in a supplicating tone of voice, said to Lusieri, '*Telos!* I was present.'"—It appears that Dr. Philip Hunt was not.'

149. '*Image and superscription.*' *S. Matthew*, xxii. 20.

151. '*So from the ground [root],*' etc. *Paradise Lost*, v. 481-3.

'*Laborious foolery.*' See vol. XI. note to p. 55.

'*Fair varieties.*' 'And all the fair variety of things.' Akenside, *Pleasures of Imagination*, I.

152. *Mr. Westall.* See ante, note to p. 29.

*Angelica Kauffman.* Maria Anna Angelica Kauffmann (1741-1807).

*Sir Joshua . . . has a whole chapter.* See the 'Character of Rubens' at the end of his *A Journey to Flanders and Holland*.

<sup>1</sup> Canto II.

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153. *Torregiano*. Pietro Torrigiano (1472-1528), Italian sculptor.  
 154. 'Gay creatures of the element,' etc. *Comus*, 299.  
 155. *Mr. Martin*. John Martin, landscape and historical painter (1789-1854), one of the founders of the Society of British Artists.  
 157. *It has been remarked*, and footnote. See *ante*, p. 82 and note.  
*Sir Joshua tells us . . . in the Idler*. Nos. 76 and 82. Cf. vol. viii. p. 131 and note.  
 Note. *Sedet in æternumque sedebit*. Virgil, *Æneid*, vi. 617-18.  
 158. 'Villainous low.' *The Tempest*, iv. 1. 210.  
 'To o'erstep the modesty of nature.' *Hamlet*, iii. 2. 21.  
 159. 'To the verge of all we bate.' Pope, *Moral Essays*, ii. 52.  
 161. 'Thrills in each nerve,' etc. See vol. viii. note to p. 83.  
 166. *Mr. Kean*. *Mr. Kemble*. Cf. *A View of the English Stage*.

## EXHIBITION OF LIVING ARTISTS

Unsigned. Now first reprinted. Contributed by Hazlitt during his stay in Edinburgh for his divorce. For his friend Ritchie, one of the founders of *The Scotsman* (then a weekly), see the present editor's *Life*, pp. 343-4.

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167. *A stranger is struck*. Cf. *Notes of a Journey*: 'Why have they such quantities of looking-glasses in Italy, and none in Scotland?' (vol. x. p. 201, footnote).  
 'A lucid mirror,' etc. Cowper, *The Task*, i. 701-2.  
 'Eager and the nipping air.' Cf. *Hamlet*, i. 4. 2.  
 'Sum all delight.' *Paradise Lost*, ix. 456.  
 'They toil not,' etc. *St. Matthew*, vi. 28.  
 168. 'A consummation,' etc. *Hamlet*, iii. i. 63.  
*Deliciæ humanæ generis*. Cf. vol. vi. note to p. 59.  
*The Lily of St. Leonard's*. Effie Deans, in *The Heart of Midlothian*.  
*The Nasmyths*. Cf. *ante*, p. 93 and note.  
*Copley Fielding*. Antony Vandyke Copley Fielding (1787-1855), landscape painter in water-colour.  
 169. 'O'ersteps the modesty of nature.' Cf. *Hamlet*, iii. 2. 21.  
*J. Linnell*. John Linnell (1792-1882), portrait and landscape painter, the intimate of Blake.  
*Patrick Gibson*. (?1782-1829), landscape painter, a foundation member of the Scottish Academy in 1826.  
*Walter Geikie*. (1795-1837), painter and draughtsman, R.S.A. 1834.  
*John Kay*. (1742-1826), portrait painter.  
*Henry Raeburn, R.A.* (1756-1823), portrait painter, knighted in 1822.  
 170. *William Allan*. (1782-1850), afterwards P.R.S.A., knighted 1842.  
*F. J. Cbantry, R.A.* Francis Legatt Chantrey (1781-1841), knighted 1835, of whom Hazlitt's praise (although he spells his name incorrectly) is consistent. His bust of Scott, the earlier of two, was executed in 1820. There is a copy in the National Gallery.  
 'To be direct,' etc. *Othello*, iii. 3. 378.  
*The Author of the Man of Feeling*. Cf. 'On Reading Old Books' (vol. xii. p. 227), and *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* (vol. vi. p. 105).

# ART CRITICISM

## WILLIAMS'S VIEWS IN GREECE

Signed 'W. H.' First reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms on Art* (1843-4).

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170. *Mr. Hugh Williams.* Hugh William Williams (1773-1829), of a Welsh family, but Scotland was his adopted country. His various sketches gained him the name of Grecian Williams.
172. 'Close to the gate.' Pope, *Odyssey*, vii., 142 *et seq.*

## FONTHILL ABBEY

Signed 'W. H.' First reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms on Art* (1843-4).

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173. 'Omne ignotum,' etc. Tacitus, *Agricola*, xxx.  
*Ships of pearl and seas of amber.* An unacknowledged recollection of 'seas of milk, and ships of amber.' Otway, *Venice Preserved*, Act v. Scene 2.  
'Sbedding a gaudy,' etc. Cf. 'Casting a dim religious light.' *Il Penseroso*, 160.
174. *Brueghel.* Jan Brueghel (1568-1625), of Brussels, a landscape painter greatly admired by Rubens, in some of whose pictures Brueghel painted the landscapes.  
*Rottenhammer.* Johann Rottenhammer (1564-1623), of Munich, historical painter. Brueghel painted some of his landscape backgrounds also.  
'Which like a trumpet,' etc.  
'That like a trumpet made young pulses dance.'  
Leigh Hunt, *The Story of Rimini*, Canto iii.
- Ob! for a glimpse of the Escorial!* Which glimpse, of course, Hazlitt did not attain. He seems to have drawn his mental picture mainly from the account of Richard Cumberland (1732-1811), the dramatist, who was sent to Spain on a diplomatic mission in 1780. See his *Memoirs*, 1807, vol. ii. pp. 78-9. I do not find Mengs' account (cf. vol. x., note to p. 203). The majority of the best pictures, including the 'piles of Titians,' were removed to the Prado Gallery, Madrid, in 1837, shortly after its foundation.  
'While groves of Eden,' etc. Pope, *Windsor Forest*, 7-8.  
*Mr. Ritchie.* Joseph Ritchie (1788?-1819), who went out on a government expedition to Africa about 1818.  
*Bruce.* James Bruce (1730-94), who explored Abyssinia in 1769-71.
176. 'Whose price is above rubies.' 'The price of wisdom is above rubies.' *Job* xxviii. 18.  
*The showman in Goldsmith's comedy.* *She Stoops to Conquer*, Act 1.  
*The Two Claudes.* See vol. x., note to p. 13.  
*We once happened to have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Beckford.* In 1802.
177. *Said Buonaparte.* In reference to Queen Louise of Prussia. Cf. vol. xiv p. 289.  
'In our mind's eye.' *Hamlet*, i. 2. 185.  
*Standing on the floor of the Tbuilleries.* Cf. 'On the Pleasure of Painting' (vol. viii. p. 15).  
*Mr. Christie.* James Christie, the elder (1730-1803), the London auctioneer. His son, James the younger (1773-1831), was both antiquary and auctioneer.
178. *Paradise of Dainty Devices.* The title of the Elizabethan anthology (1576).  
*Della Cruscan.* See vol. v. *Lectures on the English Poets*, note to p. 148.  
*Nugæ Canoræ.* Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 322.

## NOTES

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179. *Stella*. A family of French painters of various years from 1525 to 1697.  
*Franks*. Frans Francken, the younger, otherwise Don Francisco, of Antwerp (1581-1642), one of a numerous family of painters.  
*Lucas Cranach*. Luther's friend, the painter whose name is always associated with the Reformation (1472-1553).  
*Netecker*. Caspar Netcher (1639-84), of Heidelberg, painter of domestic scenes and small portraits. His two sons Constantine and Theodor were also painters.  
*Cosway*. Richard Cosway (d. 1821), the miniaturist. Hazlitt was pleased with this characterisation, and reproduced it, with minor modifications, in the essay 'On the Old Age of Artists,' which he reprinted in *The Plain Speaker*. See vol. xii. pp. 95-6 and notes.  
 180. *G. Douw* . . . *Bassan*. See vol. x., note to p. 35.

## JUDGING OF PICTURES

Unsigned. First reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms on Art* (1843-4).

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181. '*They gorge the little fame they get,*' etc. Unidentified.  
 182. *Dr. Kitchener*. William Kitchiner (1775?-1827), M.D., author of *Apicius Redivivus, or the Cook's Oracle*, 1817, a book which passed through many editions.  
*Mr. Ude*. See vol. xvii., note to p. 354.  
*As 'Squire Western would say*. See *Tom Jones*, Book iv. chap. x., etc.  
 184. *In the story*. I have not identified this allusion.

## NEW PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

Unsigned. First reprinted in *Essays on the Fine Arts* (1873), by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt, who says: 'The following note is written at the foot of the [autograph MS.] by Mr. C. Cowden Clarke: "An article written for me in the *Atlas* newspaper, by William Hazlitt. The autograph is his, and I was at his elbow while he wrote it, which occupied him about ten minutes or a quarter of an hour."'

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184. *Mr. Shee*. Sir Martin Archer Shee (1770-1850), portrait painter from the age of sixteen onwards. He was knighted upon being made President of the Royal Academy in succession to Lawrence in 1830.

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

In the present section are reprinted (1) Hazlitt's dramatic criticisms for the period 1813-17 which he omitted from *A View of the English Stage*; and (2) his writings on the theatre subsequent to the publication of that volume. See the introductory note to *A View of the English Stage*, in vol. v. As noted there, we do not know the reason for his inadequate representation of his eight months' engagement as principal dramatic critic of *The Times*. The full range of his contributions to that journal is now brought together for the first time. Unless otherwise stated in the notes, the whole of Hazlitt's dramatic criticism is unsigned; and it will be understood that in

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

the selection of the articles the editor's judgment, in some cases supported by that of his predecessors, is alone relied upon.

As regards *The Morning Chronicle*, Hazlitt appears to have written little dramatic criticism beyond that which he reproduced in *A View of the English Stage*. He was, of course, engaged simultaneously in the parliamentary department of the paper, as well as in writing on the fine arts, &c. A few additional paragraphs which appear to be his are given in the notes. An extended account of Coleridge's *Remorse*, which appeared some months before he graduated from the Parliamentary report to the general columns of the newspaper (see introductory note to vol. xx.), is also given (in part) in the notes (see p. 309, below).

Notes to performers whose names occur in *A View of the English Stage* are not repeated, and may be found by reference to the general index.

### THE STAGE

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

Nearly the whole of this paper was incorporated into the essay on 'Richard III' in *Characters of Shakspeare's Plays*. See vol. iv. pp. 300-303 and notes.

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192. 'As tenderly be led,' etc. *Othello*, 1. 3. 407.

### LOVE IN A VILLAGE

Now first reprinted.

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194. *Miss Stephens* . . . *Rosetta*. This was one of Hazlitt's favourite parts for his favourite singer (cf. *ante*, pp. 219, 342, and vol. v. p. 329), but he does not include a notice of her appearance in it in *A View of the English Stage*. I have no doubt that the present notice is his.  
*Emery's Hodge*. Cf. *ante*, p. 279.

### MR. KEAN'S LUKE

Now first reprinted.

An omission from *A View of the English Stage*. For a later appearance of Kean in the same part see *ante*, pp. 270-71.

We may note here two or three further references to Kean in *The Morning Chronicle* which supplement Hazlitt's accounts of his appearances which he reprints in *A View of the English Stage*. On February 19 there is the paragraph:

'Would it not be wise in Mr. Kean to take a character which requires less physical exertion than that of Richard, until his voice shall have recovered its natural strength? The character of Iago, for instance, which we are persuaded he would perform admirably to Mr. Pope's Othello.'

See Hazlitt's footnote to his account of Kean's first appearance as Richard III, on Feb. 15 (vol. v. p. 182). Kean acted Othello to Pope's Iago on May 5, and Iago to Sowerby's (later Pope's) Othello on May 7.

## NOTES

In his notice of Kean's Hamlet, on March 14 (*A View of the English Stage*, vol. v. p. 188) Hazlitt remarked: 'His pronunciation of the word "contumely" . . . is, we apprehend, not authorized by custom, or the metre.' On the 16th a letter is printed from 'One of the Old School,' who asserts that, in reference to 'the division of the word "contumely" in four syllables,' it was 'constantly so divided, with the full accent on the first syllable, by Garrick.' To this a paragraph of the 17th is no doubt Hazlitt's reply:

'The error in Mr. Kean's pronunciation of the word *contumely* was not in his making it four syllables, with the accent on the first, "côn-tu-me-ly," which is the true pronunciation, but in his laying the chief stress, as we apprehend he did, on the second syllable, "the proud man's con-tú-me-ly"; which leaves an evident hiatus in the measure.'

*The Morning Chronicle* correspondent, it may be noted, referred to 'a critique which appeared in most of the papers yesterday.' This illustrates a curious practice, which could not (and would not) now be followed. *The Courier* (the *Chronicle's* evening enemy) of February 16, 21 and March 15 contains in full and without acknowledgement Hazlitt's notices of Kean's Richard and Kean's Hamlet, printed as its own. In other words, Hazlitt's emergence, in conjunction with that of Kean, displaced temporarily others besides 'Mr. Mudford's spare talents' (see 'On Patronage and Puffing,' vol. viii. p. 293 and note.) *The Times* (in common no doubt with other papers) ignored Kean's first appearance altogether, attempting to rectify the omission by the explanation (on February 4) that 'so many first appearances have lately been made, and so much disappointment generally been the result, that we confess we thought little was to be expected from Mr. Kean.' They found him 'inferior to Kemble and Cooke,' but had 'seldom seen a much better Shylock.'

The following note on Kean's repetition of his Hamlet (March 21, 1814) is no doubt Hazlitt's. Cf. *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. pp. 185-9):

'DRURY-LANE THEATRE.—Mr. Kean repeated the representation of *Hamlet* to a most numerous company. Every seat in the house was filled, and the overflow was immense. In many essential passages of the part Mr. Kean had improved on his first performance from the observation of his friends. He was less sarcastic and less vehement in the expression of particular words; and even in that particular he has still to restrain his emphasis. Miss Smith in Ophelia, though she delivers parts of the text well, failed in delineating the gentleness and sensibility of the character. There was at times rather the wildness of Mad Bess than the sweet distraction of Ophelia in her expression. Now, no two kinds of insanity can be more distinct, but we see that the Managers of the other Theatre are not of our mind, for they have imposed on Miss Stephens the task of introducing the disgusting song of Tom D'Urfey into this delicate part. An attempt could not be made, more outrageous to the memory of Shakespeare, or to the taste of the public; and we trust, for their own sakes, as well as that of the amiable young artist, it will not be persevered in. We delight in the rivalry that is begun between the two Theatres. Why it has not always existed we know not; but we never wish to see either of them have recourse to *quackery* or to indecorum in their endeavours to outstrip one another.'

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

MISS O'NEILL

First reprinted in *New Writings : Second Series*.

An omission, probably unintentional, from *A View of the English Stage*.

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196. *In Belvidera and in Isabella*. In Otway's *Venice Preserved* and Garrick's *Isabella*, a version of Southerne's *Fatal Marriage*, two of Mrs. Siddons's famous parts.

*Her Juliet*. See *A View of the English Stage* (vol. viii. pp. 198-200).

197. *We have already spoken of Miss Foote*. See *A View of the English Stage* (vol. viii. p. 196).

*As Homer has described Apollo's*. Cf. *Iliad*, xx. 38.

*With good emphasis and discretion*. 'With good accent and good discretion.'

*Hamlet*, II. 2. 489.

*Rosina*. In the comic opera of that name, by Mrs. Brooke, produced in 1782.

'*In many a winding bout*,' etc. *L'Allegro*, 139-40.

MR. KEMBLE'S PENRUDDOCK

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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198. *The character of Penruddock*. In Richard Cumberland's *The Wheel of Fortune* (1795).

*With waving handkerchiefs and laurel garlands*. Which had greeted Kemble after his return from one of his periodical 'retirements' on his reappearance earlier in the year. Cf. *The Morning Chronicle* of January 17, which is one of the brief notices referred to in the introductory note :

'COVENT-GARDEN.—Mr. Kemble made his appearance on Saturday in *Coriolanus*. He was received with shouts of enthusiastic applause from every part of the house. A crown of laurel was thrown at his feet, which he afterwards fully earned by his manner of performing the part. It is certainly one of his best characters. He gave to some of the scenes a spirit and energy, and to others a dignity and grace which can scarcely be surpassed. His look, his action, his expression of the character, was in almost every part admirable. His manner of doing obeisance to his mother in the triumphal procession in the first act, and the scene with Aufidius in the last act, were the most striking passages : particularly, the action with which he accompanied the taunt to Aufidius—"I, like an eagle in a dove-cote, fluttered your Volsciano in Corioli, I alone"—gave double force and beauty to the image. In the reconciliation scene with his Mother, which is by much the finest in the Play, we thought him the least impressive. The play was got up with the utmost magnificence of scenery and decoration. The only impropriety we noticed, was the bringing in a letter containing the news of *Coriolanus's* victory, sealed and folded up as if it had been delivered by the two-penny post, amidst the most profuse and expensive representation of Roman costume.'

The remaining notes on Kemble's season (January to May) from *The Morning Chronicle*, which are also probably Hazlitt's, are as follows :

'COVENT-GARDEN, *January 21, 1814*.—Mr. Kemble played *Cato* with his usual dignity and elegance. If his performance of the part was not

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more impressive, it was the fault of the Poet, more than of the Actor. Mr. Kemble's excellence consists chiefly in vehement action or deep sentiment; and there was little opportunity for the display of either of these powers, except in the scene where Cato learns the death of his son, to which Mr. Kemble gave the true force and pathos. It is some consolation to the English under the contempt of the French for the genius of Shakespeare, to reflect that Voltaire has pronounced this didactic poem of Addison to be the *only* English tragedy.'

'COVENT GARDEN THEATRE, February 12, 1814.—There was last night an overflowing house to witness the representation of Hamlet by Mr. Kemble. It was advertised as his last appearance in that character during his present engagement—a circumstance which every amateur of the dramatic art will seriously lament, as it is in truth a school for study in it. We must also bear our testimony to the very perfect and affecting manner in which Mrs. Sterling performed the character of Ophelia. In the wild but pathetic tenderness of the airs she was uncommonly happy, and particularly as she abstained from all extravagant ornament, and sung them with their native simplicity.'

The degree in which Hazlitt, after his discovery of Kean, reserved himself for that performer, will be apparent to the reader of *A View of the English Stage*. He did justice to Kemble subsequently, in *The Champion*, *The Examiner*, and *The Times*.

- '*Is whispering nothing?*' etc. *A Winter's Tale*, 1. 2. 284 et seq.  
 199. In *Hamlet* . . . Mr. Kemble unavoidably fails. Cf. *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* (vol. iv. p. 237), where, with slight changes, Hazlitt reproduces this comparison between the Hamlet of Kemble and Kean.  
 'There is no variableness,' etc. *St. James* i. 17.  
 'Splenetic [splenitive] and rasb.' *Hamlet*, v. 1. 284.  
 'The fiery soul,' etc. Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, 1. 156-8.  
 'You shall relish,' etc. Cf. *Othello*, II. 1. 166.

### MR. KEAN'S IAGO

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

A letter, to be read in conjunction with Hazlitt's *Examiner* articles of the same title of July 24 and August 7, 1814 (see *A View of the English Stage*, vol. v. pp. 211-21). He was not at this date the dramatic critic of the journal, that position being held, during Leigh Hunt's temporary absence in Horsemonger Lane prison, by Thomas Barnes (1785-1841), who was in 1817 appointed editor of *The Times* in succession to Hazlitt's brother-in-law, Stoddart. Leigh Hunt attached to the second article a footnote explaining that the articles were not written by 'the ingenious and able critic who contributes the general theatrical article to this paper' (see vol. v., note to p. 221). On August 14, Leigh Hunt himself wrote a reply to a footnote of Hazlitt's second article concerning the character of Desdemona (vol. xx. notes). Passages of Barnes's 'Theatrical Examiner' of September 4, to which Hazlitt refers in his reply, are given in the notes. Barnes wrote a second article, on September 18, concluding the controversy.

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200. 'The gay and careless air,' etc. Hazlitt is quoting from Barnes's opening: 'We have been prevented by causes not worthy of mention from making

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

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- an earlier reply to an article which has appeared in this Paper, on the character of Iago. We had expressed our approbation of the gay and careless air which Mr. Kean threw over his representation of that arch-villain; but the writer of the article in question, though he appears to admire this extraordinary Actor, believes him to have misapprehended the peculiar traits which distinguished the Moor's ancient,' etc.
201. 'Ingenious, but not convincing.' Barnes is quoted: 'The writer whose opinions we are now combating thinks that the term "honest," which was applied to Iago, was a proof that there was something suspicious in his appearance. This observation, like all the rest, is very ingenious, but is not convincing.'
202. *Anstey's Bath Guide*. Christopher Anstey's (1724-1805) *New Bath Guide* (1766).  
 'Who rides in the whirlwind,' etc. Addison, *The Campaign*, 292.  
 'What! a gallant Venetian,' etc. This passage is from Barnes's article, a little shortened.
203. 'Therefore these stops,' etc. *Othello*, III. 3. 120.  
 'A monster in his thought.' *Ibid.*, III. 3. 107.  
 'She scarce hath said,' etc. *Paradise Lost*, IX. 664-78.
204. 'Wronged Othello's service.' *Othello*, III. 3. 467.  
 'He should assume a virtue,' etc. *Hamlet*, III. 4. 160.  
 Negative success. Cf. vol. XII. p. 273 and note.

### KEAN'S BAJAZET, ETC.

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

A 'Theatrical Examiner' omitted by Hazlitt from *A View of the English Stage*.

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205. In *Bajazet*. In Nicholas Rowe's (1674-1718) *Tamerlane* (1702), revived at Drury Lane, Nov. 6, 1815.  
 'Full of sound and fury.' *Macbeth*, v. 5. 27.  
 'A load to [would] sink a navy.' *Henry VIII.*, III. 2. 383.
206. *Ambition as the hunger of noble minds*. 'Ambition! the desire of active souls,' etc. (Act II. Scene 2). Hazlitt probably has also in mind Spenser's 'O sacred hunger of ambitious mindes' (*Faerie Queene*, v. xii. 1).  
*Our two Country Girls*. *The Country Girl*, produced originally in 1766, an adaptation by Garrick of *The Country Wife* of Wycherley. Revived at Drury Lane (Nov. 7) with Bartley as Moody, Wallack as Harcourt, S. Penley as Sparkish, and Mrs. Mardyn as Miss Peggy, and at Covent Garden (Nov. 8) with Fawcett as Moody and Mrs. Alsop as the Country Girl.
207. 1. Hazlitt introduces the sentence beginning 'Happy age' with slight modification into his lecture on Wycherley and Congreve in the *Comic Writers* (vol. vi. p. 70).  
*A back-board and steel monitor*. The 'monitor' (of wood) was, apparently, synonymous with the back-board (cf. Cowper, *The Task*, II. 577-93), but the term is here used, presumably, of the steel collar which sometimes formed part of the apparatus.  
 'I take her body,' etc. These lines are not Suckling's, but from Congreve's 'Song,' 'Tell me no more I am deceiv'd,' for Southerne's *The Maid's Prayer*, Act v. (1693).

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### MR. GRIMALDI

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

An omitted concluding paragraph, from the 'Theatrical Examiner' of the same date. See *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. pp. 268-70).

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208. '*Would have eclipsed the gaiety of nations.*' Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*, Life of Edmund Smith.

*The gentleman at St. Helena.* Napoleon had left the shores of England for St. Helena in the preceding August, arriving on October 15.

### THE FAIR DESERTER

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

An omitted concluding paragraph, from the 'Theatrical Examiner' of the same date. See *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. pp. 329-30).

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208. *The Fair Deserter.* A 'Comick Sketch, in one act, interspersed with musick' (Genest). Produced August 24, and acted seven times.

### THE MISS DENNETTS

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

An omitted concluding paragraph, from the 'Theatrical Examiner' of the same date. See *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. p. 342).

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209. *Mr. Dimond.* William Dimond of Bath, the author of a great number of plays. Cf. vol. viii. p. 366.

*The Miss Dennetts.* Dancers, and Hazlitt's 'wards in criticism' (*ante*, p. 369). They figure handsomely in *A View of the English Stage*, but this is their first appearance.

210. '*Trinal simplicities below.*' Cf. 'In their trinal triplicities on hye.' *The Faerie Queene*, i. i. 38.

'*Three red roses on a stalk.*' 'Their lips were four red roses on a stalk.' *Richard III*, iv. 3. 12.

'*Proserpine let fall,*' etc. Cf. *A Winter's Tale*, iv. 4. 116.

'*Whom lovely Venus,*' etc. *L'Allegro*, 14-16.

### TWO NEW FARCES

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

An omitted concluding paragraph, from the 'Theatrical Examiner' of the same date. See *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. pp. 347-50).

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210. *Nota Bene.* 'Attributed to Hookham' (Genest). Produced at Drury Lane Dec. 12, and acted twice.

*Love and Toothache.* Produced at Covent Garden Dec. 13, with Liston, Emery, Blanchard, Miss Foote, and Mrs. Liston, and acted twice.

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

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210. *Mr. H—, thou wert damned.* This is the first appearance of this passage, which Lamb prefixed (down to 'for want of a better name to pass them off') to his farce when he published it in his *Works* in 1818. Hazlitt subsequently (1822) incorporated it in his *Table-Talk* essay, 'On Great and Little Things' (vol. viii. p. 232). *Mr. H—* was produced at Drury Lane on Dec. 10, 1806, and acted for one performance, with the author, his sister, Hazlitt, and Crabb Robinson together in the pit. It is, of course, the tenth anniversary of this occasion which Hazlitt is celebrating—a gesture of friendship at the end of a year which had witnessed some 'violent strainings' of their relationship owing to the freedom of Hazlitt's political writing against Coleridge, Wordsworth and Southey. Cf. *Life*, p. 209.

### JANE SHORE

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

An omitted concluding paragraph, from the 'Theatrical Examiner' of the same date. See *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. p. 352).

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211. *Jane Shore.* The opening sentence only of the passage refers to Rowe's tragedy, in continuation of the text of *A View of the English Stage*.  
*Mrs. Alsop who is said to have an engagement.* Hazlitt is reviewing her first appearance at Drury Lane, on Jan. 3, as Violante in Mrs. Centlivre's *The Wonder*.  
*The laborious comparison we attempted.* See *ante*, p. 207.

### MISS O'NEILI'S WIDOW CHEERLY

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

A 'Theatrical Examiner,' omitted by Hazlitt from *A View of the English Stage*.

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212. *The Soldier's Daughter.* By Andrew Cherry, produced in 1804. For another account of this play, written in 1819 as an introduction to Oxberry's *New English Drama*, see vol. ix. pp. 76-8.  
213. *Whose heart and whose ridicule.* I.e. 'reticule.' The form is 'obsolete, except dialect' (N.E.D.).  
*A very excellent criticism.* Footnote to Middleton and Rowley's *A Fair Quarrel* (*Specimens of Dramatic Poets*, ed. Lucas, 1903, pp. 114-15).

### PENELOPE AND THE DANSOMANIE

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

A 'Theatrical Examiner,' omitted by Hazlitt from *A View of the English Stage*.

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214. *Its graceful columns and Corinthian capitals.* Cf. Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution* (ed. Payne, p. 164).  
'Like to see the unmerited fall,' etc. Cf. *ibid.*

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214. *The gentleman who is understood, etc.* Lamb's friend and Hazlitt's, William Ayrton (1777-1858), was musical director at the King's Theatre in 1817 and again in 1821.  
*The Dansomanie.* For another account of this ballet see *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. pp. 325-6).
215. *Madame Pasta.* Giuditta Pasta (1798-1865), whom Hazlitt is never tired of praising after seeing her in Paris, in 1824. He seems, indeed, to forget this early view of her, on her first London visit. See his *Plain Speaker* essay, 'Madame Pasta and Mademoiselle Mars,' in vol. xii.  
 'Such were the joys,' etc. Bickerstaffe, *Love in a Village*, Act II. Sc. 1.  
 'Roll on,' etc. Ossian, *The Songs of Selma*.

### OROONOKO

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

A 'Theatrical Examiner,' omitted by Hazlitt from *A View of the English Stage*.

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215. *Oroonoko.* Thomas Southerne's (1660-1746) tragedy, produced in 1696.
216. 'The melting mood.' *Othello*, v. 2. 349.
217. *This servile war.* The reference is to Southey. Cf. vol. vii. p. 204.  
 'A great moral lesson.' See vol. xiii., note to p. 213.  
*The Convention of Paris.* Cf. *Political Essays* (vol. vii. pp. 159 *et seq.*)  
 'The devil has not,' etc. 'The devil damn thee black, thou cream-fac'd loon!' *Macbeth*, v. 3. 11.  
*Imogene.* In Maturin's *Bertram*. Cf. the notice of that play in *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. p. 307).
218. 'The music of her honey-vows.' Cf. 'That suck'd the honey of his music vows.' *Hamlet*, iii. 1. 164.  
 'He often has beguiled us,' etc. Cf. *Othello*, 1. 3. 156.  
*Gray, the poet, etc.* See a letter to Horace Walpole, September, 1737 (*Letters*, ed. Tovey, i. 8).

### THE PANNEL AND THE RAVENS

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

A 'Theatrical Examiner,' omitted by Hazlitt from *A View of the English Stage*.

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218. *The Pannel.* By John Philip Kemble, produced at Drury Lane in 1788.  
 'Balsam of fierabras.' Described by Don Quixote. See *Don Quixote*, i. i. 2.  
*The bowling of the rabble.* The reference is to the unpopularity of the Regent, whose favourite comedian Liston was.  
*The wax figures at Mrs. Salmon's.* An old-established exhibition in Fleet Street, near Temple Bar. See *The Spectator*, No. 28; and cf. vol. iv., note to p. 151.
219. 'Circe and the Sirens three.' *Comus*, 253.  
*Miss Stephens . . . Rosetta.* See *ante*, p. 194.  
*Miss O'Neill . . . Mrs. Oakley.* In George Colman the elder's *The Jealous Wife*. Cf. vol. v., note to p. 308.  
 'The ravens are boarse,' etc. Cf. *Macbeth*, 1. 5. 39-40.

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

PAGE

219. *Toujours perdrix*. See vol. xi. p. 91 and note.  
*Mr. Canning*. Cf. vol. xi. p. 152 footnote.  
*The Maid and Magpie, and the Family of Anglade*. See *A View of the English Stage*, vol. v. pp. 244 and 279.  
*'And choughs,' etc.* Cf. *Macbeth*, III. 4. 125-6.  
*The Maid of Palisseau*. *The Magpie, or the Maid of Palaiseau*, a version attributed to T. J. Dibdin of *La Pie Voleuse*, produced at Drury Lane, Sept. 12, 1815.

### THE HEIR OF VIRONI

Now first reprinted.

A 'Theatrical Examiner,' omitted by Hazlitt from *A View of the English Stage*.

PAGE

220. *The Heir of Vironi*. Or, Honesty the Best Policy. This musical after-piece is described by Genest as 'never acted.' Hazlitt's reference is to its conformity to type.  
*'All power of face.'* Unidentified.  
 221. *Mr. Booth continues to give his imitations of Mr. Kean*. See *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. pp. 354-8).

### JOHN GILPIN

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

A 'Theatrical Examiner,' omitted by Hazlitt from *A View of the English Stage*.

PAGE

222. *'And when he next,' etc.* *John Gilpin*, St. 63.  
*A little parlour where we used to visit*. A Wem reminiscence, presumably. Cf. *Life*, pp. 7-8.  
*'The turnpike men,' etc.* *John Gilpin*, St. 29 and 30.  
 223. *'First, last, and midst.'* Cf. *Paradise Lost*, v. 165.  
*'That ligament,' etc.* *Tristram Shandy*, Book vi. Chap. 10.  
*Mrs. Hill*. 'From Belfast,' her first appearance. Cf. *The Times* notice, ante, pp. 226-7. It will be noted that for a few weeks after joining *The Times* Hazlitt continued his weekly theatrical article in *The Examiner*, no doubt studying Leigh Hunt's convenience, who took the feature over from him.

### DON GIOVANNI AND KEAN'S EUSTACE DE ST. PIERRE

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

A 'Theatrical Examiner,' omitted by Hazlitt from *A View of the English Stage*.

PAGE

224. *The last time we saw the Opera of Don Giovanni*. See *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. pp. 362-6).  
*Spenser's description of Belphebe*. *The Faerie Queene*, II. iii. 21.  
 225. *The Surrender of Calais*. By George Colman, Junior, originally produced at the Haymarket in 1791, and described by Genest as 'a jumble of Tragedy, Comedy, and Opera.'

## NOTES

### PAGE

225. 'A clout upon that bead,' etc. *Hamlet*, II. 2. 537.  
'Though we have seen this,' etc. *Ibid.*, II. 2. 533-41, from memory.  
'Thunder, nothing but thunder.' *Measure for Measure*, II. 2. 110.  
A new character. Achmet in *Barbarossa*. See *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. p. 372).

### MR. KEMBLE'S POSTHUMUS

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

An omitted concluding paragraph from the 'Theatrical Examiner' of the same date. See *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. p. 372); and cf. Hazlitt's *Times* notice, ante, pp. 231-2.

### PAGE

226. 'On tessellated pavements,' etc. Unidentified.  
'Musical as is Apollo's lute,' and following quotation. *Comus*, 476-7.  
'Set on some quantity,' etc. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 46.

### MRS. HILL'S LADY MACBETH

First reprinted in *New Writings : Second Series*.

### PAGE

226. 'When I demanded,' etc. Cf. *Macbeth*, I. 5. 45.  
227. First character in which we ever saw her . . . also the last. See *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. pp. 312-14 and 373 and note).

### MR. KEAN'S EUSTACE

First reprinted in *New Writings : Second Series*.

### PAGE

228. 'Those flashes of his spirit,' etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, IV. 1. 209.  
'A flame of sacred sympathy.' Cf. 'A flame of sacred vehemence,' *Comus*, 795.

### THE ROMP

First reprinted in *New Writings : Second Series*.

### PAGE

229. *The Romp*. Founded on Bickerstaffe's *Love in the City*, and first produced 1781.

### MR. KEAN'S BENEFIT

First reprinted in *New Writings : Second Series*.

Cf. Hazlitt's *Examiner* notice in *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. p. 372).

### PAGE

230. *Barbarossa*. By John Brown (1715-66), produced 1754.  
*Paul and Virginia*. A musical drama by James Cobb (1756-1818), produced 1800.  
*Mazzinghi*. Count Joseph Mazzinghi (1765-1844), composer and some time musical director of the Italian Opera House.

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

### MR. KEMBLE'S POSTHUMUS

First reprinted in *New Writings : Second Series*.

For Hazlitt's final article on Kemble in this season ('Mr. Kemble's Retirement,' June 25, 1817), one of the two *Times* notices which he reprinted in *A View of the English Stage*, see vol. v. pp. 374-9.

PAGE

231. 'Begin to doubt the equivocation.' *Macbeth*, v. v. 43.

### MRS. SIDDONS'S LADY MACBETH

Now first reprinted.

Cf. this notice with Hazlitt's last contribution to *The Examiner*, written on the same occasion, which he reprinted in *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. p. 373).

PAGE

233. 'Sightless substances.' *Macbeth*, i. 5. 49.

### MISS O'NEILL'S BENEFIT

First reprinted in *New Writings : Second Series*.

PAGE

233. *Her Mrs. Haller*. In Kotzebue's *The Stranger*, produced 1798.

'Forgot himself to stone.' Pope, *Eloisa to Abelard*, 24.

'Unused to flow.' Shakespeare, *Sonnets*, xxx.

234. 'So fare thee well, old Jack.' 1 *Henry IV.*, II. IV. 147.

### MRS. ALSOP'S BENEFIT

First reprinted in *New Writings : Second Series*.

PAGE

234. *The Devil to Pay*. By Francis Godolphin Waldron.

*The Wedding Day*. By Mrs. Inchbald, produced 1794.

'Take the ravished [prison'd] soul,' etc. *Comus*, 251.

'And total, glorious [glorious, total] want of vile hypocrisy. Leigh Hunt, 'To the Rt. Hon. Lord Byron on his Departure for Italy and Greece,' 116; quoted from *The Examiner*, April 28, 1816.

### A NEW FARCE

Now first reprinted.

PAGE

235. *A plot against the Government*. See Hazlitt's simultaneously written articles on 'The Spy-System,' for *The Morning Chronicle*, in *Political Essays* (vol. vii.). Mr. Burke has said. 'The ears of the people of England are distinguishing.' *Reflections on the French Revolution* (ed. Payne, p. 123).

## NOTES

### M. TALMA AND M<sup>LE</sup>. GEORGES

Now first reprinted.

#### PAGE

235. *M. Talma and Mademoiselle Georges*. François Joseph Talma (1763-1826) and Marguerite-Joséphine Weimer, otherwise Georges (1787-1867), whose only visit to London this was. When Hazlitt found them absent from Paris in 1824, he wrote, 'I had seen them both formerly, and should have liked to see them again' (*Notes of a Journey*, vol. x. p. 154). This was the occasion, as we also know from the *Plain Speaker* essay, 'On the Spirit of Obligations' (vol. xii. p. 83), from which it is clear that Hazlitt attended the recitals. We should naturally conclude that he did so in his capacity of *Times* critic; and it would, presumably, be in the same capacity that he received an invitation to meet Talma which he was unable to accept (*ibid.*, p. 86).
236. *In Œdipus*. For Hazlitt's impression of Talma's *Œdipus* (which we do not know him to have seen on any other occasion) see the *Plain Speaker* essay, 'On Novelty and Familiarity' (vol. xii. p. 298) and *Notes of a Journey* (vol. x. p. 193).

### THE LITTLE THEATRE

Now first reprinted.

#### PAGE

236. *Exit by Mistake*. See *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. pp. 321-2).
237. 'They are tedious and brief.' See vol. v. note to p. 120.
- Miss Somerville. Cf. *ante*, p. 226 and *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. p. 352).

### MR. AMHERST'S SHYLOCK

Now first reprinted.

#### PAGE

237. *A Mr. Amberst*. 'From Cheltenham, first appearance' (Genest). *Sermo bumi obrepens*. See vol. viii., note to p. 246.
238. *Spiritus precipitandus est*. 'Præcipitandus est libre spiritus.' Petronius *Arbiter, Satiae*, 118.

### MR. MATHEWS

First reprinted in *New Writings: Second Series*.

#### PAGE

238. *Wild Oats*. Or, *The Strolling Gentleman*. By John O'Keefe (1747-1833), produced in 1791.

### A BOLD STROKE FOR A HUSBAND

Now first reprinted.

#### PAGE

239. *Mr. Kemble's retirement from the stage*. Of which Hazlitt had written in *The Times* of June 25. See *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. pp. 374-9).
240. 'Cleanse the bosom,' etc. *Macbeth*, v. 3. 44.
- 'Hair-breadth'scapes.' *Othello*, i. 3. 136.

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

### THE WIZARD

Now first reprinted.

PAGE

241. *Her Maid of Palaiseau*. See *ante*, p. 219 and note.

### MUNDEN'S SIR PETER TEAZLE

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

PAGE

241. *Past Ten O'clock*. 'A moderate farce' by Dibdin, produced March 11, 1815. (Genest.)

### MR. YOUNG'S HAMLET

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

PAGE

243. *The Miller and his Men*. A successful melodrama by Pocock, produced in 1813.  
244. 'The paragon of animals.' *Hamlet*, II. 2. 320.  
'Peaked or pined.' *Macbeth*, I. 3. 23.  
'Ob that this too, too solid flesh,' etc. *Hamlet*, I. 2. 129.  
'The pretty Ophelia.' *Ibid.*, IV. 5. 56.  
*Miss Stephens*. Whose first appearance in this part was to the Hamlet of Young at Covent Garden, March 21, 1814. (Cf. *ante*, p. 444).

### WILD OATS

First reprinted in *New Writings : Second Series*.

PAGE

245. *Mr. Stanley*. This actor does not seem to have succeeded in establishing himself on the London stage. Hazlitt himself appears to have had second thoughts about him (*ante*, p. 250).  
*Give over his 'face-making.'* Cf. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 263.  
'The golden cadences of poesy.' *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV. 2. 126.  
*At Bath about a year ago*. Where Hazlitt had been on a visit to his parents, newly removed from Addlestone in Surrey, in September 1816.  
*Young Mirabel*. In Farquhar's *Inconstant*.

### THE BELLE'S STRATAGEM

Now first reprinted.

PAGE

246. *Miss Brunton*. Elizabeth Brunton (1799-1860), who in 1823 married Frederick Henry Yates, the actor, and became the mother of Edmund Yates, novelist and journalist.  
*The masquerade scene*, Act IV. Scene 1.

### THE POOR SOLDIER

First reprinted in *New Writings : Second Series*.

PAGE

247. *The Poor Soldier*. By John O'Keefe (1747-1833), produced in 1783.

## NOTES

### DOWTON IN THE HYPOCRITE

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

Cf. the notice of *The Hypocrite* in *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. pp. 245-7).

#### PAGE

248. 'Very craftily qualified.' Cf. *Otello*, II. 3. 41.

### MISS BRUNTON'S ROSALIND

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

#### PAGE

249. 'Good emphasis and discretion.' Cf. 'With good accent and good discretion,' *Hamlet*, II. 2. 489.  
*The prompt-book critics.* Cf. *ante*, pp. 191-2.  
'The gods,' etc. *As You Like It*, III. 3. 16.

### THE SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND

First reprinted in *New Writings: Second Series*.

#### PAGE

250. *The Suspicious Husband*. By Benjamin Hoadley (1706-57), produced 1747.  
'Her clothes bear her up most mermaid-like.' *Hamlet*, IV. 7. 177.  
251. *The Conscious Lovers*. By Steele, produced 1722.  
*The Confederacy*. By Vanbrugh, produced 1705.

### MR. LISTON

First reprinted in *New Writings: Second Series*.

#### PAGE

251. Negative success. Cf. *ante*, p. 204 and note.  
*Tom Thumb the Great*. Fielding's burlesque, produced 1730.  
*What a name, and what a person!* The characterisation of Liston's Lord Grizzle which follows Hazlitt transferred bodily, with minor modifications, to *The English Comic Writers*. See vol. VI. pp. 159-60.  
*It has been said*. By Hazlitt himself, in *The Champion* (*ante*, p. 197).

### MR. MAYWOOD'S ZANGA

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

See the article 'Mr. Maywood's Shylock' (September 26, 1817), which was one of the two *Times* criticisms which Hazlitt reprinted in *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. p. 374).

#### PAGE

253. *The very tempest and whirlwind, etc.* Unacknowledged from *Hamlet*, III. 2. 7.  
'From the sound,' etc. Cf. Collins, Ode, *The Passions*, 19-20.  
'Distilling them,' etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, I. 5. 64-5.  
'Too tame.' *Ibid.*, III. 2. 18.  
''Twas I that did it.' *The Revenge*, Act V. Sc. 2.  
*Forced gait.* I. *Henry IV.*, III. 1. 135.

# DRAMATIC CRITICISM

## THE REFUSAL

Now first reprinted.

PAGE

254. *The Refusal*. Produced in 1721.

## MR. KEAN'S RICHARD

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

PAGE

255. 'Now is the winter,' etc. *Richard III.*, I. 1. 1.  
In our opinion, etc. Cf. what follows with Hazlitt's earlier *Morning Chronicle*  
paper, 'The Stage' (*ante*, pp. 191-4).  
256. 'Even so I' etc. *Richard III.*, I. 1. 88.  
'They do me wrong,' etc. *Ibid.*, I. 3. 42.  
257. 'His grace looks cheerfully,' etc. *Ibid.*, III. 4. 50.

## THE WONDER

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

PAGE

258. *The Wonder*. For another notice of this play see *A View of the English Stage*  
(vol. v. pp. 332-3).  
'Snatch a grace,' etc. Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 155.  
'Catch ere she falls,' etc. Pope, *Moral Essays*, II. 20.

## VENICE PRESERVED

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

PAGE

259. 'The most replenished,' etc. *Richard III.*, IV. 3. 18.

## SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

PAGE

260. *Borrowed from Fielding's Joseph Andrews*. Cf. vol. VI. p. 115.  
'His singularity,' etc. Johnson frequently denounced singularity. The  
instances are collected in Boswell's *Life*, ed. G. B. Hill, II. 74-5.

## MR. KEAN'S MACBETH

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

PAGE

261. *Except in the murder scene*. Cf. *A View of the English Stage*, vol. v. p. 207.  
'Proud and lion-hearted,' etc. Cf. 'Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care,'  
etc. *Macbeth*, IV. 1. 90.

## NOTES

### THE BEGGAR'S OPERA

First reprinted in *New Writings : Second Series*.

PAGE

261. *Miss Byrne*. 'From Dublin.' Genest does not record her appearances.  
262. '*As light as bird from brake* [brier].' *Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. 1. 401.

### MR. KEAN'S OTHELLO

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

PAGE

262. *This young débutante*. Her name was Mrs. Robinson.  
263. *Mr. Kean's Othello, etc.* This passage, to the end of the notice, was a favourite with Hazlitt, and was quoted by him more than once. Cf. *ante*, pp. 302, 393-4.

### MISS BRUNTON'S BEATRICE

First reprinted in *New Writings : Second Series*.

PAGE

263. *This lady*. Whose previous appearances, as Letitia Hardy and Rosalind, had been noticed by Hazlitt. See *ante*, pp. 246, 249, and *post*, note to p. 344.

### MR. KEAN AND MISS O'NEILL

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

PAGE

265. '*O'erstep the modesty*,' etc. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 21.  
266. '*As one in suffering all*,' etc. *Ibid.*, III. 2. 71.  
'*Abide the beating*,' etc. *Twelfth Night*, II. 4. 97.

### THE HONEY MOON

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

PAGE

267. '*What is set down for him*.' *Hamlet*, III. 2. 43.  
'*Plautus was too light*,' etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, II. 2. 420.  
*He hit the stage between wind and water*. See vol. XII., note to p. 272.  
'*And near him*,' etc. Collins, *Ode on the Poetical Character*, 43-4.  
'*Grew sharp as a pen*.' *Henry V.*, II. 3. 17.  
268. '*Go thou*,' etc. *S. Luke*, x. 37.

### OUTWITTED AT LAST

Now first reprinted.

PAGE

268. '*Makes defect perfection*.' *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. 2. 236.

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

### MR. KEAN'S RETURN

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

PAGE

269. 'Not Fate itself could awe.' *Richard III.* (Cibber's version), Act v. Scene 3.

### KING JOHN

First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

PAGE

270. 'To me,' etc. *King John*, III. 1. 70-1.

### MR. KEAN'S LUKE

Now first reprinted.

PAGE

270. *His performance of this character.* See *ante*, pp. 195-6.

### THE DRAMA: No. I

Signed 'L. M.' First reprinted (with omissions) by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms of the English Stage* (1851), where the title, 'On Playgoing and on some of our Old Actors,' is supplied.

PAGE

271. *Semper varium et mutabile.* Virgil, *Æneid*, iv. 569.  
*The stage, 'the inconstant stage.'* 'The moon, the inconstant moon.' *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 2. 107.  
*'No one generation,' etc.* 'No one generation could link with the other.'  
Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution* (ed. Payne, p. 112).  
272. *'To dally with the wind,' etc.* Cf. *Richard III.*, I. 3. 265.  
*'With coy [sweet] reluctant,' etc.* *Paradise Lost*, iv. 311.  
*The stage is . . . a school of humanity.* Cf. vol. xvii. p. 367.  
*Omnes boni et liberales, etc.* Unidentified.  
273. *'Should God create,' etc.* *Paradise Lost*, ix. 911-13.  
274. *'Play the hostess.'* Cf. *'Ourself will mingle with society, and play the humble host. Our hostess keeps her state,' etc.* *Macbeth*, III. 4. 4-6.  
*One person more! Napoleon, of course.*  
275. *'Eclipsed the gaiety of nations.'* Cf. *ante*, note to p. 208.  
*Beau Mordecai.* In Macklin's *Love à-la Mode*, brought out in 1760.  
*Lord Sands.* In *King Henry VIII.*  
*'With nods and becks,' etc.* *L'Allegro*, 28.  
276. *'Suit of office.'* Unidentified.  
*And surely never lighted on the stage, etc.* 'And surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision.' Burke, of Marie Antoinette (*Reflections on the French Revolution*, ed. Payne, p. 89).  
*'Secret Tatle.'* In Congreve's *Love for Love*.  
277. *'Made a sunsbine,' etc.* *The Faerie Queene*, I. iii. 4.  
*'Talked far above singing.'* Beaumont and Fletcher, *Philaster*, Act v. Sc. 5.  
*'Her bounty,' etc.* *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 2. 133.  
*Her Nell.* In Coffey's *The Devil to Pay* (1731).

## NOTES

### PAGE

279. Mrs. Bunn. I.e. Miss Somerville. See *ante*, pp. 217, 226, 259, and *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v., note to p. 307).  
 280. 'Best-found and latest,' etc. Unidentified.  
 'Extenuate,' etc. *Othello*, v. 2. 342.

### THE DRAMA: No. II

Unsigned. First reprinted in part ('Miss O'Neill's Retirement') by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms of the English Stage* (1851).

### PAGE

280. 'There were two,' etc. Cf. *St. Luke*, xviii. 31 *et seq.*  
 'A consummation,' etc. *Hamlet*, iii. 1. 63.  
 281. 'To our moist vows denied.' *Lycidas*, 159.  
 'Slippery turns,' etc. *Coriolanus*, iv. 4. 12.  
 'Mr. Limberbam,' etc. Dryden's *The Kind Keeper*; or, *Mr. Limberbam* (1680).  
 'With its worldly goods,' etc. *The Book of Common Prayer*, Marriage Service.  
 'The list of weeds,' etc. Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Dying*, Chap. 1. § 2.  
 'In monumental mockery.' *Troilus and Cressida*, iii. 3. 153.  
 282. *The Surrey*, etc. The Surrey Theatre, in Blackfriars Road, opened in 1782; The Cobourg Theatre, Waterloo Bridge Road, opened in 1818; The Sans Pareil, better known as The Adelphi Theatre, in the Strand, opened in 1806.  
 283. 'Gentle and low,' etc. *King Lear*, v. 3. 273.  
 284. 'To praise him or blame him too much.' Cf. Goldsmith, *Retaliation*, 30.  
 285. 'Like to another morn,' etc. *Paradise Lost*, v. 310-11.  
 'Moody madness,' etc. Gray, *Ode, On a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, 79-80.  
 286. 'Mar [scar] that whiter skin,' etc. *Othello*, v. 2. 4.  
 'The best virtues.' Cf. 'A fault I will not change for your best virtue.' *As You Like It*, iii. 2. 302.  
 287. *Gallantry, or Adventures at Madrid*. Jan. 15, 1820; acted only once.  
 'Had its brother,' etc. Cf. Pope, *Moral Essays*, iv. 117-18.  
 288. 'As it was set down for him.' *Hamlet*, iii. 2. 43.  
 'The courtier's or the lover's melancholy.' Cf. *As You Like It*, iv. 1. 10 *et seq.*  
 He is himself alone. Cf. vol. iv. p. 192 and note.  
 Gilray. James Gillray (1757-1815), the caricaturist.  
 Mrs. Edwin. Elizabeth Rebecca Richards (1771?-1854) first appeared at Covent Garden 1789; married in 1791 John Edwin the younger.  
 289. *Miss Wensley*. She was advertised (and figures in Genest) as, 'A Young Lady, her first appearance on any stage.' She performed *Rosalind* three times, and acted *Beatrice* on January 20.  
*Miss Tree*. Ann Maria Tree (1801-62), afterwards Mrs. Bradshaw, made her first appearance at Covent Garden in 1818.  
*Magis pares*, etc. Cf. 'Similia omnia magis visa hominibus, quam paria.' *Livy*, xlv. 43.  
 Note 1. Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, 1-2.  
 290. 'All is grace above,' etc. 'Thus all below is strength, and all above is grace.' Dryden, *Epistle to Congreve*, 19.  
 'Of our infirmity.' 'As if you were a god to punish, not a man of their infirmity.' *Coriolanus*, iii. 1. 82.  
 'To relish all,' etc. *The Tempest*, v. 1. 23.  
 'Keeping his state.' Cf. *Henry VIII.*, 1. 3. 10.  
 'I banish you.' Cf. *Coriolanus*, iii. 3. 101.  
 291. 'The most sweet voices.' *Ibid.*, ii. 3. 179.  
 'Guns, drums,' etc. Pope, *Satires*, 1. 26.

# DRAMATIC CRITICISM

## THE DRAMA: No. III

Unsigned. First reprinted (with omissions) by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms of the English Stage* (1851).

### PAGE

291. 'Ample scope [room], etc. Gray, *The Bard*, 5.  
'This I like,' etc. Cf. vol. i. p. 202.  
*Snatch a grace*, etc. Unacknowledged from Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, 153.
292. 'Constrained by mastery.' Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, The Franklin's Tale, 36.  
'Speculative,' etc. *Otello*, i. 3. 271.  
'Clappeth bis wings,' etc. See vol. x., note to p. 70.  
'There be arriving,' etc. *Muioptomos*, St. xxii. and xxvii.
293. 'Like greyhound on the slip.' *Henry V.*, iii. 1. 31.  
'The full eyes,' etc. Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Dying*, Chap. 1. § 2.  
'Embalmed with odours.' *Paradise Lost*, ii. 843.  
'A wide O.' Cf. 'This wooden O,' *Henry V.*, Prol. 13.  
'Come, let me clutch thee.' *Macbeth*, ii. 1. 34.  
'Those gay creatures,' etc. *Comus*, 299-301.
294. *W—m in S—sbire*. Wem, Shropshire.  
*W—cb*. Whitchurch, nine miles from Wem. Cf. 'My First Acquaintance with Poets' (vol. xvii. p. 107).  
*The Rev. Mr. J—s*. Jenkins. Cf. as above.
295. *Like Nebuchadnezzar's image*. Cf. *Daniel*, iii.  
'Of imagination all compact.' *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. 1. 8.  
'Their mind to them,' etc. Sir Edward Dyer's 'My mynde to me a kyngdome is,' set to music by Byrd in 1588.  
'Of all earth's bliss,' etc. See vol. ix., note to p. 122.  
*Fortunatus's Wishing Cap*. Straparola, *Nights*.
296. 'By his so potent art.' *The Tempest*, v. 1. 50.  
'Happy alchemy of mind.' See vol. iv., note to p. 65.  
*Who once overtook us*. An additional reminiscence, no doubt, of his journey on foot to visit Coleridge, in May 1798, for which see 'My First Acquaintance with Poets.' Cf. *Life*, p. 41.  
'Severn's sedgy side.' 'Gentle Severn's sedgy bank.' 1 *Henry IV.*, i. 3. 98.  
'Alas! how changed,' etc. Pope, *Moral Essays*, iii. 305-6.  
Note. 'The beggars are coming,' etc. From the old song beginning, 'Hark, hark, the dogs do bark,' etc.
297. 'Pleasure's finest point.' Unidentified.  
*Cheveux-de-fris*. Hazlitt's (or the magazine's) spelling of this word appears to be without etymological warrant.  
'Made of penetrable stuff.' *Hamlet*, iii. 4. 36.
298. 'See the puppets dallying.' *Ibid.*, iii. 2. 257.  
*Mr. Stanley*. See *ante*, pp. 245-6.  
*Panopticon*. Cf. vol. xi., note to p. 13.  
*Mr. H. Kemble*. Henry Kemble (1789-1836), son of Stephen (see vol. v. p. 340), and nephew of Mrs. Siddons. He had dropped into the minor theatres after an unsuccessful season under his father's management at Drury Lane, 1818-19.  
'My soul turn from them.' Goldsmith, *The Traveller*, 165.
299. *We believe has been said*. By Hazlitt himself (*ante*, p. 210).  
'Her, lovely Venus,' etc. *L'Allegro*, 14-16.  
'Vernal airs,' etc. *Paradise Lost*, iv. 264-6.

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299. 'Three red roses,' etc. Cf. *Richard III.*, iv. 3. 12.  
 'The witchery,' etc. Wordsworth, *Peter Bell*, i. 265.  
*The Count Stendhal, who speaks so feelingly.* The allusion is presumably to Stendhal's *Rome, Naples et Florence en 1817*. Cf. vol. viii., note to p. 285.  
*Mr. Reeve.* John Reeve (1799-1838), a mimic and comedian, chiefly associated with the Adelphi.  
 300. 'Our hint to speak.' *Othello*, i. 3. 142.  
 Note. *The Surrey Theatre.* The Surrey Theatre had been taken by Thomas John Dibdin (1771-1841) in 1816.  
 301. *Mr. Peter Moore.* Peter Moore (1753-1828), member of parliament and company promoter. He was at one time one of the managers of Drury Lane Theatre.  
*The Antiquary.* A musical play in three acts by Daniel Terry, Jan. 25, 1820.  
 'Warbled.' 'Come, warble, come.' *As You Like It*, ii. 5. 38.  
 302. *In the words of a contemporary journal.* That is, his own *Times* notice of Oct. 27, 1817. See ante, p. 263.

### THE DRAMA: No. IV

Unsigned. First reprinted (with omissions) by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms of the English Stage* (1851).

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303. 'The big and palmy state.' *Hamlet*, i. 1. 113.  
*Pope is reported to have said.* I have not identified this allusion.  
 304. *Mr. Milman's Fazio.* Produced at Covent Garden, Feb. 5, 1818.  
 'Look abroad,' etc. Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, Book I., iii. 6.  
 'Are embowelled,' etc. Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution* (ed. Payne, p. 101).  
 305. *The Upholsterer . . . in the Tatler.* Cf. vol. vi. p. 96.  
 'A counterfeit presentment.' *Hamlet*, iii. 4. 54.  
 'Interlocutions between Lucius and Caius.' See vol. xi., note to p. 92.  
 306. 'To relish all,' etc. *The Tempest*, v. 1. 23.  
 'Unfeathered, two-legged thing.' Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, i. 170.  
 307. 'You may wear,' etc. *Hamlet*, iv. 5. 183.  
 'He sits in the centre,' etc. *Comus*, 382-3.  
 308. *Mr. Wordsworth's banking after the drama.* Wordsworth's tragedy, *The Borderers*, composed in 1795-6, and soon afterwards refused by the Covent Garden management, was not published till 1842.  
 'The daily intercourse,' etc. Cf. Wordsworth, *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*.  
 Note. Joanna Baillie (1762-1851), whose *Plays on the Passions* had appeared in 3 vols. 1798-1812.  
 309. 'Like a wild overflow,' etc. Beaumont and Fletcher, *Philaster*, Act v. Sc. 3.  
 'Tis three feet long,' etc. Wordsworth, *The Thorn*, 33 (text of *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798).  
 Mixed modes. Locke's phrase. Cf. vol. ii. p. 185.  
*We have read Manfred.* Cf. vol. xi. p. 74, and vol. xvi. p. 415.  
*What he has said of Mr. Maturin.* See *Biographia Literaria*, Chap. xxiii.  
*His Remorse is a spurious tragedy.* Such, on balance, was and remained Hazlitt's opinion, qualified by the assertion, made most generously in *The Spirit of the*

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*Age* (vol. xi. p. 219) that 'it is full of beautiful and striking passages.' We know from *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. p. 247) that he saw it performed, and there appears to be no doubt (in spite of a contrary opinion expressed by the present editor in *Life*, p. 154) that he wrote the notice in *The Morning Chronicle* of January 25, 1813. See introductory note.

The article, which occupies two and a half columns of a twenty-column newspaper (two-thirds of which was devoted to advertisements), opens with the *dramatis personæ* and a lengthy *précis* of the plot, which may be omitted. The remainder of the article is as follows :

'The story of this play, of which our readers will be able to form a tolerably correct idea from the foregoing outline, affords an admirable opportunity for the display of those powers of natural description and sentiment, which Mr. Coleridge is so well known to possess. The author's name stands high for the reputation of genius, and he has very successfully employed that genius in the production of a dramatic work, which is fraught with beauty and interest. In the progress of the fable, the wild and romantic scenery of Spain, the manners and superstitions of the age, are described with a grace of poetic fancy, which, while it brings the objects before us by a magic charm, forwards the development of the plot, and gives a peculiar interest to the characters and sentiments of the persons represented. The wild harp of poetry mingles with, and softens the sterner voice of the tragic muse. In the judicious appropriation, as well as in the richness and beauty of his decorations, we have no hesitation in saying that Mr. Coleridge has highly succeeded. His images are not less striking from their originality, and a peculiar felicity of expression, than from their intrinsic merit. Among many other passages we might notice the description of Alvar's love for music when a child, the sorcerer's invocation, and the song in the third act; and the beautiful and impassioned apostrophe on life, near the conclusion of the play. The conduct of the story does not involve any violent transitions, or gross improbabilities. In executing this part of his task, the author discovers equal judgment and skill. The interest is kept alive by a succession of situations and events, which call forth the finest sensibilities of the human breast, without shocking the imagination by an accumulation of hopeless and unmerited suffering. The artful management by which, in the distribution of poetical justice, the punishment of guilt is effected by the guilty, or devolves on a fierce and uncontrollable spirit of revenge, in the person of Alhadra, so as to leave no stain on the more perfect and interesting characters of the play, deserves the highest praise. In the conception and delineation of character, Mr. Coleridge has shewn a powerful imagination, as well as deep reflection on the general principles which regulate and modify our stronger passions. The characters of Alhadra, Isidore, and Ordonio are the most marked and prominent. The last of these appears the most studied, the most complex and refined, and is, we should suspect, the author's favourite. Besides the obvious features, and stronger workings of the passions in this character, there are many traits of a more subtle nature which, we trust, will not escape the nice observation of an enlightened audience, though they may be regarded as too metaphysical for tragedy. The character of Ordonio, as Mr. Coleridge has described it, is that of a man of originally strong understanding, and morbid feelings; whose reason points out to him a high and severe standard of unattainable perfection, while his temperament urges him on to a violation of all the ordinary distinctions of right and wrong; whose pride finds consolation for its vices in its contempt for the dull virtues, or perhaps hypocritical pretences of the generality of men: whose conscience seeks a balm for its wounds in

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theoretical speculations on human depravity, and whose moody and preposterous self love, by an habitual sophistry, exaggerates the slightest affront, or even a suspicion of possible injury, into solid reasons for the last acts of hatred and revenge. A lie is with him a sufficient provocation of a murder, and the destruction of his supposed enemy, from which he shrinks as an assassination, is instantly converted into an act of heroism by the attempt of his antagonist to defend himself. Thus he says to Alvar, whom he suspects of deceiving him—"I thank thee for that lie, it has restored me! Villain, now I am thy master, and thou shalt die!"<sup>1</sup> And again to Isidore, when he reluctantly draws his sword in the cavern scene—

"Now this is excellent, and warms the blood!  
My heart was drawing back  
With weak and womanish scruples. Now my vengeance  
Beckons me onward with a warrior's mien,  
And claims that life my pity robbed her of—  
Now I will kill thee, thankless slave, and count it  
Among my comfortable thoughts hereafter."<sup>2</sup>

There are many instances of the same kind, by which the Author has carried on what may be called the underplot of the character, and which shew the hand of a master. We have insisted the longer on this excellence, because of its rarity, for, except Shakespeare, who is every where full of these double readings and running accompaniments to the ruling passion, there is scarcely any other dramatic writer who has so much as attempted to describe the involuntary, habitual reaction of the passions, and understanding on each other:—We say, the involuntary, or unconscious reaction which takes place, for as to the known, conscious opposition and struggle for mastery between reason and passion, duty and inclination, there is no want of rhetorical declamation, of profound calculations, and able casuistry on the subject in the generality of dramatic writers, ancient or modern, foreign or domestic.—The gradation of confidence in villainy, corresponding with the rank and power of the guilty, is very pointedly marked in the character of Isidore, the accomplice of Ordonio. There is a selfish, calculating cunning, a servile meanness, a cowardly superstitious hesitating scrupulousness in his conduct, corresponding with his subordination in crime, and which the stronger will and self-originating passions of his employer almost totally subdue in him. The two principal female characters, Alhadra and Teresa, have a very beautiful effect, as contrasted with each other. The former of these is a Moorish woman, of high spirit, and dauntless activity, ever mindful of her wrongs, full of fears, and ready for revenge. Her natural temperament, the spirit of her religion, the persecution she has suffered, her husband's death, combine in working her up to a pitch of heroic energy and frenzied passion, which is finely relieved by the tender sensibility, the meek piety, and resigned fortitude of the orphan ward of the Marquis Valdez. The scene in the beginning of the first act, in which Teresa is introduced defending her widowed attachment to her first love, is full of a dignified sorrow, mingled with an artless simplicity of nature, which has been seldom equalled. In some parts of this character, however, there is something of a German cast, of that sentimental whine and affectation of fine feeling, of which we have had a full quantity at second-hand, and in translations. There are also some occasional words and phrases, which are too often repeated, and which savour too much of a particular style, to be

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Act v. Sc. 1, 145-6.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Act iv. Sc. 2, 160-6.

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perfectly to our taste. *Sed ubi plurima nitent*, &c.<sup>1</sup> The language is in general rich, bold, elegant, natural,—and the verse unites to the studied harmony of metrical composition, a variety of cadence, an ease and flexibility, by which it can be adapted, without effort, to the characteristic expression and sudden transitions of impassioned declamation.

‘It has been observed, that dramatic writers may be divided into two classes, that Shakespeare alone gives the substance of tragedy, and expresses the very soul of the passions, while all other writers convey only a general description or shadowy outline of them—that his is the real text of nature, and the rest but paraphrases and commentaries on it, rhetorical, poetical, and sentimental. If Mr. Coleridge has not been able to break the spell, and to penetrate the inmost circle of the heart, he has approached nearer than almost any other writer, and has produced a very beautiful representation of human nature, which will vie with the best and most popular of our sentimental dramas.

‘Too much praise cannot be bestowed on the exertions of the actors. Mr. Elliston’s representation of Don Alvar preserved a tone of solemn and impressive dignity, suited to the elevation of the character. Mr. Rae, by the force of his action, and by the striking changes both of his voice and countenance, portrayed, with admirable effect, the conflict of passions in the bosom of Ordonio. The management of the scenery, decorations, &c. gave every possible assistance to the success of the play. The *coup-d’œil* of the invocation scene was one of the most novel and picturesque we remember to have witnessed. —The play might, perhaps, be reduced to a more convenient length by omitting some of the scenes in the third act, after the entrance of the Inquisitors, which retard the progress of the story, without heightening the interest or developing the characters. The remonstrances between Valdez and Teresa, on the subject of her love, become tedious from repetition; and the contrast between the pictures of the brothers is too evidently copied from the well-known passage in Shakespeare. We are decidedly of opinion, that the entrance of the Moors, and their assassination of Ordonio, ought to precede the final reconciliation between him and his brother. “The quality of mercy” ought not to be “strained,”—especially on the stage. The duty of forgiveness, however amiable in itself, is not a dramatic virtue; and a tragic writer ought rather to effect his purpose by appealing to the passions of his audience, than to their goodness. The Play was received throughout with marks of the deepest attention, and reiterated bursts of applause, and announced for a second representation amidst the acclamations of the audience.’

At the end of the article is printed ‘Song to a Spirit in Mr. Coleridge’s Tragedy of Remorse’ [Act III. Sc. I].

Hazlitt’s thanks from the author for this redoubtable effort to aid his dramatic success may be deduced from a letter to Rickman: ‘I have not yet read what the *remorseless* critics of the “*ano abstersuræ Chartæ*” [The Examiner] say of the play, but I know that Hazlitt in the M.C. has sneered at my presumption in entering the lists with Shakespeare’s Hamlet in Teresa’s description of the two brothers: when (so help me the Muses) that passage never once occurred to my conscious recollection, however it may, unknown to myself, have been the working idea within me. But mercy on us! Is there no such thing as two men’s having similar thoughts on similar occasions?’ (letter of Jan. 25, Williams, *Life and Letters of John Rickman*, 1912, p. 166). Coleridge, of course, was at this date, in spite of political divergence, still a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 351.

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- power in *The Morning Chronicle* office (cf. his letter to Perry of five years later, regarding his lectures, printed by Mr. E. L. Griggs in *Unpublished Letters of S. T. Coleridge*, 1932, II. 223-4) and Hazlitt may have received orders which he dutifully carried out. At all events, he never refers to the article.
309. 'What? if one reptile,' etc. *Remorse*, Act III. Sc. 2.
310. *This is a way in which no one ever justified a murder.* See, however, the essay 'On Knowledge of Character,' (vol. VIII. pp. 314-15), in which Hazlitt appears to reverse this judgment.  
*The Hebrew.* By George Soane (1790-1860).
311. *A sort of theatrical join-band.* See vol. XVII., note to p. 18.  
'I had as lief,' etc. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 4.  
*It has been observed by an excellent judge.* ? Northcote.  
'Instinct with fire.' *Paradise Lost*, II. 937.  
*Disjecta [disiecti] membra poetarum.* Horace, *Satires*, I. 4. 62.  
*We wish the writer would . . . declare himself.* See vol. VI., note to p. 130.
312. 'Gives evidence of it,' etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, III. 1. 115.  
'His affections,' etc. *Hamlet*, III. 1. 170.
313. 'Holds sovereign sway,' etc. *Macbeth*, I. 5. 71.  
'A far cry to Lochiel.' 'It's a far cry to Lochow.' See *Rob Roy*, note to chap. 29.  
'Hitherto shalt thou come,' etc. *Job*, xxxviii. 11.  
'Like kings,' etc. Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 64-5.
314. 'Like to that sanguine flower,' etc. *Lycidas*, 106.
315. 'Unkindness,' etc. *Othello*, IV. 2. 159.  
'To the very top of our lungs.' Unidentified.  
*Three Weeks after Marriage.* Arthur Murphy's comedy, produced in 1776.  
*Mr. Connor.* Charles Connor (d. 1826), Irish comedian.  
*The Manager in Distress.* By George Colman the elder.  
*Too Late for Dinner.* A farce by Richard Jones the actor.

### THE DRAMA: No. V

Signed 'L.' First reprinted (with omissions) by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms of the English Stage* (1851).

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317. 'Great heir of fame.' Milton, *On Shakespeare*, 5.  
'Strange that,' etc. Cf. 'Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year.' *Hamlet*, III. 2. 141.  
*Don Quixote's throwing open the cages, etc.* *Don Quixote*, Part II., Book I. Chap. 17.  
'Tasteless monster,' etc. 'A faultless monster whom the world ne'er saw.' John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, *Essay on Poetry*.  
'If that they love,' etc. Cf. 'But that I love the gentle Desdemona,' etc. *Othello*, I. 2. 25.  
'Unboused, free condition,' etc. *Othello*, I. 2. 26.  
*Berlin and Milan decrees.* Of Napoleon, 1806 and 1807.  
'As if he would confine,' etc. *Samson Agonistes*, 307.  
*Like the lady in the lobster.* Cf. vol. VIII., note to p. 67.
318. 'A beard so old and white.' 'Gainst a head so old and white as this.' *King Lear*, III. 2. 24.  
*Nabum Tate's Lear.* Produced in 1681.  
*We remember on some former occasion.* See his *Times* criticism of July 23, 1817 (*ante*, p. 239).

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319. 'There's sympathy.' *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, II. 1. 7.  
'Applauds you,' etc. *Macbeth*, v. 3. 53.
320. 'He must live to please,' etc. Johnson, Prologue at the opening of Drury Lane Theatre, 54.
321. 'Lard the lean earth,' etc. 1 *Henry IV.*, II. 2. 116.  
*Shapsugar*. ? Refuse sugar. The word is not in the *N.E.D.*  
'A clock that wants both hands,' etc. Unidentified.
322. 'He might exhibit it,' etc. Cf. *Blackwood's Magazine*, 'Notices on the Acted Drama in London, No. XIV,' March 1820, p. 626: 'It would be a fine thing to see a farce in which no part of Liston's character should be "set down for him," except the exits and entrances—the blanks being left to be filled up by the inspiration of the moment. It would be played every night for a month, and we should go to see it every time!' The theatrical correspondent of *Blackwood's* from 1818 to 1820 was P. G. Patmore, who devotes a passage in his *My Friends and Acquaintance* (1854, II. 278–80) to this 'ferocious personal attack on myself, almost by name.' I have not identified the connection in which Hazlitt used the words which he places in inverted commas. Patmore, of course, stole from him consistently, and in a spirit different from the humorous enterprise of Reynolds (see below, note to p. 353). Cf. the introductory note to *Sketches of the Picture Galleries* in vol. IX., and the *Atlas* dialogue, 'The Court Journal,' in vol. XX.  
'First, midst, and last.' Cf. *Paradise Lost*, v. 165.  
Note. 'Such petty larceny rogues.' Unidentified.
323. *Shakspear versus Harlequin*. An alteration of *Harlequin's Invasion* produced in 1759.  
'Charge on heaps,' etc. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, III. 2. 29.  
*Unlike the sign of the good woman*. Cf. vol. I. p. 352 and note.
324. *Quod sic mihi*, etc. Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 188.  
'See o'er the stage,' etc. Cf. Thomson, *The Seasons*, Winter, 646.  
'But thou, oh Hope,' etc. Collins, Ode, *The Passions*, 29–32.  
'In herself sums all delight.' Milton says of Eve that she 'in look sums all delight' (*Paradise Lost*, IX. 456) and also refers to her as 'in herself complete' (*ibid.*, VIII. 549). Hazlitt, as elsewhere, combines the two quotations.
325. 'Such were the joys,' etc. Bickerstaffe, *Love in a Village*, Act II. Sc. 1.
326. *Sir Hugh Middleton's Head*. The sign of this inn, opposite Sadler's Wells, figures in Hogarth's 'Evening.' The house was rebuilt in 1831.
327. 'Shut their blue-fringed lids,' etc. Coleridge, *Fears in Solitude*, 84–6.  
*Mr. Booth's Lear*. Covent Garden, April 13, 1820.
328. 'I am every inch a King.' *King Lear*, IV. 6. 109.  
'The fiery Duke.' *Ibid.*, II. 4. 105.
329. *Henri Quatre*. A musical romance in three acts by Thomas Morton.  
''Twas Lancelot,' etc. Leigh Hunt, *The Story of Rimini*, III. 535–6 ['young pulses'].  
'Ab! brilliant land,' etc. To this quotation in the magazine John Scott adds the following editorial note: 'Does our Correspondent here refer to the ink he has himself shed in severe criticism of the French National Character?' For Scott on Hazlitt's politics see the present editor's *Life*, p. 294.  
'The invincible knights of old.' Wordsworth's Sonnet, 'It is not to be thought of,' 10.
330. *The present crisis of affairs*. Hazlitt alludes to the Revolution in Spain, in 1820.

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### THE DRAMA: No. VI

Signed 'T.' First reprinted in part ('Mr. Kean's Lear') by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms of the English Stage* (1851).

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331. *Very great in the curse.* Lear was not, apparently, among the parts in which Hazlitt saw Kemble. Cf. 'Mr. Kemble's Retirement' in *A View of the English Stage*.
332. 'Accumulate horrors,' etc. *Othello*, III. 3. 370.  
'That has outlasted,' etc. 'Held out a thousand Storms, a thousand Thunders.' Beaumont and Fletcher, *Philaster*, Act v. Sc. 3.
333. 'Tore it to tatters,' etc. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 11.  
'Hear, Nature, hear,' etc. The quotations from *King Lear* in this paragraph are from Act I. Sc. 4.  
'Compunctious visitings of nature.' *Macbeth*, I. 5. 46.
334. 'Like a phantasma,' etc. *Julius Caesar*, II. 1. 65.
335. 'Dear daughter,' etc. *King Lear*, II. 4. 156.  
'Beloved Regan,' etc. *Ibid.*, II. 4. 135.  
'Appal the guilty,' etc. *Hamlet*, II. 2. 590.  
'Create a soul,' etc. *Comus*, 562.
336. 'A huge dumb heap.' Daniel, 'Description of Stonehenge,' 3.  
'Fiery quality of the Duke,' etc. *King Lear*, II. 4. 93.  
'I will do such things,' etc. *Ibid.*, II. 4. 283.  
'Blow winds,' etc. *Ibid.*, III. 2. 1.  
'More germane,' etc. *Hamlet*, V. 2. 165.  
'How dost,' etc. *King Lear*, III. 2. 68.  
'Didst thou give all,' etc. *Ibid.*, III. 3. 4.
337. 'What, have his daughters,' etc. *Ibid.*, III. 4. 66.  
'Was set down.' *Hamlet*, III. 2. 43.  
'Aye, every inch a king.' *King Lear*, IV. 6. 109.  
'When I do stare,' etc. *Ibid.*, IV. 6. 110.  
'Pray do not mock me.' *Ibid.*, IV. 7. 59.
338. 'Which sacred pity,' etc. *As You Like It*, II. 7. 123.  
'False gallop.' *Ibid.*, III. 2. 119.  
'Honest sonsy,' etc. Burns, *Address to a Haggis*, 1.  
'Incapable of its [her] own distress.' *Hamlet*, IV. 1. 179.  
*When Miss Stephens first came out in Mandane.* Cf. ante, p. 342, *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. p. 192), and 'On Patronage and Puffing' (vol. VIII. p. 292).
339. 'Concords of sweet sounds.' *The Merchant of Venice*, V. 1. 84.
340. l. 34. In *The London Magazine* the article concludes with a notice (signed 'X.') of a new after-piece at Drury Lane, entitled *The Lady and the Devil*, and a flattering notice of *Virginius* at Covent Garden, which are not by Hazlitt.

### MR. MACREADY'S MACBETH

A 'Theatrical Examiner,' signed 'M.' Written in relief of Leigh Hunt, who was ill. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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340. *For his benefit.* On June 9, 1820, when he played Macbeth for the first time.

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341. 'Air-drawn dagger,' etc. 'Air-drawn dagger' is, *Macbeth*, III. 4. 62, and 'On thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,' *ibid.*, II. 1. 46.  
 'Thick-coming fancies.' *Ibid.*, v. 3. 38.  
 'But still to follow nature,' etc. Unidentified.
342. 'Docked and curtailed.' Cf. 'We know that they [bishops] hate to be doct and clipt.' Milton, *Reformation in England*, I.  
 'Twa lang Scotch miles.' Cf. 'We think na on the lang Scots miles.' *Tam O' Shanter*, 7.  
 'Ob Hell-kite, all?' *Macbeth*, IV. 3. 217.  
*David Rizzio*. An opera by Colonel Hamilton, produced at Drury Lane on June 17, 1820.  
*The Lord of the Manor*. A comic opera by General John Burgoyne (1722-92), produced in 1780.  
*The Libertine*. An opera attributed to Isaac Pocock, produced in 1817. See vol. v. p. 370.  
*Mr. Contrast*. In *The Lord of the Manor*.  
 'A speaking face.' Cf. 'A singing face' (vol. v., note to p. 371).  
*Moll Flagon*. In *The Lord of the Manor*.  
 'Let those laugh,' etc. Cf.  
     'Let those love now, who never lov'd before;  
     Let those who always lov'd, now love the more.'  
     Parnell, Catullus, *The Vigil of Venus*.
- Mrs. Salmon*. Eliza Salmon (1787-1849), a well-known concert and oratorio singer.  
*D'une patbétique*, etc. Rousseau, *Confessions*, Liv. 1.
343. 'Thoughts of which,' etc. Cf. 'Yet loss of thee would never from my heart.' *Paradise Lost*, IX. 912.  
 'With other notes,' etc. *Paradise Lost*, III. 17.  
*The voice of Liberty*, etc. The Revolution in Spain had broken out early in 1820, and on March 10 King Ferdinand had proclaimed the Liberal Constitution of 1812.  
 'Had three ears again.' Cf. 'Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.' *Macbeth*, IV. 1. 78.  
*When we gave the account of Miss Stephens*. See *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. p. 192); and cf. 'On Patronage and Puffing' (vol. VIII. p. 292 and note). It will be noted that the present passage is in effect repeated in the essay written two years later.  
 'Know the return of spring.' *The Beggar's Opera*, Act II. Sc. 1.

### THE DRAMA: No. VII

Signed 'L.' First reprinted (with omissions) by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms of the English Stage* (1851).

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343. *As some artists have said of Nature*. Cf. vol. XII. p. 94 and note.  
*The only article*, etc. The reference is to his third article, published in the March number, which was no doubt written while the theatres were closed in consequence of the deaths of the Duke of Kent (January 23, 1820) and George III. (January 29, 1820).  
*Mr. Weathercock*. Thomas Griffiths Wainwright (1794-1852), afterwards well known as a forger and murderer, was at this time a regular contributor

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- to *The London Magazine*, chiefly under the pseudonym of Janus Weathercock. His contributions were for the most part on the Fine Arts, but in the number for June 1820 (*Janus's Jumble*, chap. III.) he wrote some remarks on the theatres, in the course of which he chaffed 'Mr. Drama' (i.e. Hazlitt) on some of his theatrical criticisms, and especially on his article on the minor theatres published in March. To these remarks Hazlitt replies in the present essay. He dealt further with the same subject in the essay 'On Vulgarly and Affectation' (vol. VIII. pp. 160-1), which he wrote immediately afterwards.
343. *As Kings love Queens*. George IV. having begun divorce proceedings against Queen Caroline in June 1820.
344. 'Fat, fair and forty.' Scott, *St. Ronan's Well*, Chap. vii.  
 'Odious in satin,' etc. 'Odious! in woollen! 'twould a saint provoke.' Pope, *Moral Essays*, I. 246.  
 'Like little wanton boys,' etc. *Henry VIII.*, III. 2. 359.  
 Sir Piercie Shafton . . . Mysie Happer. In Scott's *The Monastery*, published 1820.  
*The bewitching Miss Brunton*. Elizabeth Brunton (*ante*, pp. 246, 249, 263), who terminated in April her three years' engagement at this theatre. She then retired to the provinces, reappearing at the London Theatre, Tottenham Court Road, in 1822. She is not to be confused (as the present editor has succeeded in confusing her, vol. VIII., note to p. 277), with a Miss Fanny Brunton, 'from the Brighton theatre,' who appeared with Macready at Covent Garden in January 1822, but who did not establish herself on the London stage.  
*She shall be his Protection*, etc. 'Be henceforward named, for example, my Protection, and let me be your Affability.' *The Monastery*, Chap. xv.  
 'Inexpressive thee.' Cf. 'Unexpressive she.' *As You Like It*, III. 2. 10.  
 'Written in our heart's tables.' Cf. *All's Well that Ends Well*, I. 1. 106.  
*Asbley's*. I.e. Astley's. See vol. XVII., note to p. 173.
345. 'Milanie's foot of fire.' See vol. VIII., note to p. 161.  
 'Entire affection scorneth [hateth],' etc. *The Faerie Queene*, Book I. Canto VIII. St. 40.  
 'A man's mind,' etc. 'Men's judgements are a parcel of their fortunes.' *Antony and Cleopatra*, III. 13. 52.  
 'Diamond rings,' etc. Hazlitt quotes from Wainewright's article.  
*To dry Miss Stephens's bonnet*. One count in Janus's indictment of 'Mr. Drama' being: 'He leaves dear Miss Stephens to wear for the whole evening, without ever drying it, the same gauze French bonnet, wet with the salt spray, in which she had weathered the driving storm.' Cf. *ante*, p. 301.  
 'We came,' etc. An adaptation, presumably, of the famous 'Veni, vidi, vici.' *Virginius*. James Sheridan Knowles's (1784-1862) *Virginius* was produced at Covent Garden on May 17, 1820.  
 'Strike his lofty bead,' etc. 'Sublimi feriam sidera vertice.' Horace, *Odes*, I. 1. 36.
346. *The Virginius and the David Rizzio*, etc. Another *Virginius*, with Kean in the title rôle, was produced at Drury Lane on May 29, 1820. *David Rizzio*, an opera by Colonel Hamilton, appeared at the same theatre on June 17.  
 'Tis the taste of the ancients,' etc. Cf. vol. XI. p. 172.  
 A former article. See above, note to p. 340.  
 'I never saw you,' etc. *Virginius*, Act IV. Sc. 1.  
 'The lie,' etc. *Ibid.*, Act IV. Sc. 2.  
 'To be sure she will,' etc. *Ibid.*, Act IV. Sc. 2.

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347. 'Let the Forum wait for us!' *Ibid.*, Act iv. Sc. 1.  
 'The freeborn Roman maid.' Varied slightly from phrases applied to Virginia in the play.  
 Our deputy of the wardrobe. Wainwright.  
 'Lest the courtiers,' etc. *The Beggar's Opera*, Act II. Sc. 2.
348. 'Let the galled jade,' etc. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 253.  
 The same boy-poet, etc. Cf. the note on Knowles in *The Spirit of the Age* (vol. xi. p. 184).  
 Mr. Kean at his benefit. June 12, 1820. The play was *Venice Preserved*, followed by *The Admirable Crichton*.  
 'Why are those things hid,' etc. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, I. 3. 133.  
 Educated in the fourth form, etc. Cf. *ante*, p. 363. This reference appears to be to Elliston, who was educated at St. Paul's School, Covent Garden.  
 Cast in the antique mould, etc. The reference is to Kemble.  
 Note. 'An honest man,' etc. Pope, *Essay on Man*, iv. 248.
349. 'By Heavens,' etc. Unidentified.  
 'In this expectation,' etc. Cf. 'This was looked for at your hand, and this was balked.' *Twelfth Night*, III. 2. 26.  
 'And what of this new opera,' etc. 'And what of this new book the whole world makes such a rout about?' Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, Book III, Chap. xii.  
 'Nothing can come of nothing.' 'De nihilo nihil.' Persius, *Satires*, III. 84.
350. Miss Povey. Born in 1804, and appeared first at Drury Lane in 1817.
351. 'Softly sweet in Lydian measures.' Dryden, *Alexander's Feast*, 97.  
 He fell . . . ten thousand fathoms down. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, II. 933-4.  
 Giovanni in London. By William Thomas Moncrieff (1794-1857), originally produced at the Olympic on December 26, 1817.
352. 'She forgot to be a woman,' etc. Cf. *Cymbeline*, III. 4. 157.  
 'Like a new ta'en sparrow.' *Troilus and Cressida*, III. 2. 36.

### THE DRAMA: No. VIII

Signed 'T.' First reprinted (with an omission) by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms of the English Stage* (1851).

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352. 'Like marigolds,' etc. Cf. 'The marigold, that goes to bed wi' the sun,' etc. *A Winter's Tale*, IV. 4. 105.
353. The 'Great Vulgar and the Small.' Cowley, *Horace, Odes*, III. 1.  
 'Raised so high,' etc. Cf. 'High throned above all highth.' *Paradise Lost*, III. 58.  
 'Such tricks,' etc. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. 1. 18.  
 A contemporary critic. This allusion, I fancy, is to the 'Theatrical Examiner' of July 9, reprinted by the present editor as Hazlitt's in *New Writings: Second Series*, pp. 113-16. He had understudied Leigh Hunt just before, it is true (*ante*, pp. 340-2); but a comparison of the *Examiner* notice of the Surrey Theatre 'Heart of Midlothian' with the further notice of the same production in the *London Magazine* 'Drama' for the month of October, which Hazlitt 'got written for him' (*ante*, p. 369), leaves no possible doubt that both notices are from the same hand. We know of no hand skilful enough to achieve the impersonation save that of John Hamilton Reynolds (1794-1852). Reynolds, in many respects an obscure figure in spite of his honourable place in the biography of Keats and Mr. G. L. Marsh's recent

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- attempt to define his claim to attention in his own right (J. H. Reynolds, *Poetry and Prose*, Oxford Miscellany, 1928), was with Hazlitt on *The Champion* and *The Yellow Dwarf*, and was introduced by him, at the end of 1818, to *The Edinburgh Review*—as a consequence of which, he tells Leigh Hunt, 'I never set eyes on him for a year and a half after' (*Life*, p. 321). This lapse of time would bring us approximately to the July of 1820, when a revived Reynolds writes the *Examiner* theatrical notice, and re-approaches Jeffrey (see a letter of July 13, printed in *The Times* of October 30, 1928) with a proposal to review Keats's *Lamia* volume (already in hand with Jeffrey himself) and to provide 'a literary article on Hazlitt's 3 last vols.' (meaning, in all probability, the *Lectures on the English Poets, Comic Writers, and Age of Elizabeth*, a review of the last of which, by Talfourd, appeared in November). For Reynolds' increasing connection with *The London Magazine* when it passed to Taylor and Hessey in the following year, his marriage in 1822 and concentration on his career of solicitor, the pages of Mr. Marsh's introduction may be usefully consulted. He does not emerge again in Hazlitt's biography until he writes (not too generously) his obituary for the newly-founded *Athenaeum* (reproduced in the *Nation and Athenaeum* of September 11, 1930). For an example of Reynolds in the character of Hazlitt's *alter ego* when the writing of delegated dramatic criticism is not in question the reader is referred to a review of Allan Cunningham's *Sir Marmaduke Maxwell* in the *London Magazine* for November 1822, also reprinted erroneously by the present editor in *New Writings: Second Series*, pp. 179-85.
354. 'Present no mark.' 2 Henry IV., III. 2. 284.  
 'You may as well,' etc. *Ibid.*, III. 2. 288.  
 'One bubble,' etc. Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Dying*, Chap. 1. § 1.  
*Her Yarico*. In Colman's *Inkle and Yarico* (1787).  
 'We had rather,' etc. Cf. *All's Well that Ends Well*, 1. 1. 75.
355. 'Do more favourably incline.' Cf. 'This to hear would Desdemona seriously incline,' *Othello*, 1. 3. 146. Probably the transposition of adverbs is from 'more favourably minister' (*ibid.*, II. i. 277).  
 'In the catalogue,' etc. Cf. 'Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men.' *Macbeth*, III. 1. 92.  
 'To curl her hair,' etc. See Congreve's *The Way of the World*, Act II. Sc. 5.  
 'Who rant and fret,' etc. Cf. *Macbeth*, v. 5. 25.  
 'Turretted, crowned,' etc. Unidentified.  
 'Vine-covered hills.' See vol. VIII., note to p. 189.
356. 'And murmur,' etc. Landor, *Gebir*, Book 1.  
 'Sigb his soul,' etc. Cf. 'And sighed his soul towards the Grecian tents.' *The Merchant of Venice*, v. 1. 5.  
*Bid Britannia rival*, etc. 'O bid Britannia rival Greece!' Warton, 'Ode to Fancy.'
357. 'A brother of the groves.' Cf. vol. XVII. p. 356.
358. *Crockery and Peter Pastoral*. In *Exit by Mistake and Teazing Made Easy* respectively.  
 'His tears,' etc. Cf.  
 'The tears which came to Matthew's eyes  
 Were tears of light, the oil of gladness.'  
 Wordsworth, *Matthew* (text of *Lyrical Ballads*, 1800).
- 'Sic transit,' etc. Thomas à Kempis, *De Imitatione Christi*, 1. 3. 6.
359. 'Stands on end,' etc. Cf. *Macbeth*, 1. 5. 19.

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359. 'Let those laugh,' etc. Cf.  
     'Let those love now, who never lov'd before;  
     Let those who always lov'd, now love the more.'  
     Parnell, *The Vigil of Venus*.
360. 'Compunctious visitings.' *Macbeth*, I. 5. 46.  
     *Little Pickle*. In *The Spoilt Child*.

### THE DRAMA: No. IX.

Signed 'L.' First reprinted (with omissions) by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms of the English Stage* (1851).

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361. *The great cat, Rodilardus*. In Rabelais. See *Pantagruel*, IV. 67.  
     'When wind and rain,' etc. Unidentified.  
     'Dressed in a little brief authority,' etc. *Measure for Measure*, II. 2. 118.
362. *Mr. Kean's name stands pre-eminent*. The 'lordly capitals' are omitted in the magazine.  
     'You take my house,' etc. *The Merchant of Venice*, IV. 1. 375.  
     'Over a vast and unbearing ocean.' Cf. vol. XI. p. 100.  
     'It is not friendly,' etc. Adapted from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, III. 2. 217-18.  
     'Cleansed,' etc. *Macbeth*, V. 3. 44.  
     'Flesh is heir to.' *Hamlet*, III. 1. 63.  
     'Organ-stop.' Cf. 'The thunder, that deep and dreadful organ-pipe.' *The Tempest*, III. 3. 98.
363. 'To the passing wind.' Unidentified.  
     'Not a jot,' etc. *Othello*, III. 3. 215.  
     'But never more,' etc. *Ibid.*, II. 3. 249.  
     'Never so sure,' etc. Pope, *Moral Essays*, II. 51-2.  
     *In medio*, etc. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, II. 137.  
     *They hiss the Beggar's Opera in America*. *The Times* of Dec. 10, 1817, quotes from New York papers dated Oct. 27 an account of the refusal of a New York audience to hear *The Beggar's Opera*.
364. 'With the rooted malice of a friend.' Cf. vol. XI. p. 82 and note.  
     *The Vampyre*. By James Robinson Planché (1796-1880), adapted from 'Le Vampyre.'  
     *The celebrated story*. 'The Vampyre,' by John William Polidori (1795-1821), was published in 1819. Byron had intended to write a story on the same subject. See *Letters and Journals*, ed. Prothero, III. 446-53, and IV. 286 and 296.  
     'See how the moon,' etc. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, V. 1. 109.
365. *The Diamond Ring*. Adapted by Theodore Hook from *He would be a Soldier* (1786), and produced Aug. 12, 1820.  
     *A Milan commission*. Appointed to collect evidence against the Queen during her residence in Italy.  
     *An Adonis of sixty*. See vol. XI., note to p. 174.
366. 'Misery,' etc. *As You Like It*, II. 1. 51.  
     '*Russian sufferers*.' For the relief of whom funds were opened in England, with the support of *The Times* and other newspapers, in December 1812.  
     '*Or load*,' etc. *Henry VIII.*, III. 2. 383.  
     '*Palsied old*.' *Measure for Measure*, III. 1. 36.  
     '*To see a void made in the Drama*,' etc. 'I do not like to see . . . any void produced in society; any ruin on the face of the land.' Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution* (ed. Payne, p. 164).

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## THE DRAMA: No. XI.

Signed 'W. H.' First reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms of the English Stage* (1851).

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367. 'At last he rose,' etc. *Lycidas*, 192-3.  
 'As broad,' etc. Cf. *Macbeth*, III. 4. 23.  
 'In act,' etc. Cf. *Othello*, I. I. 62.  
 'The immediate jewel,' etc. *Ibid.*, III. 3. 156.  
 'Solid pudding,' etc. Pope, *The Dunciad*, I. 54.  
*The Italian poet.* Unidentified.  
 'Tenth,' etc. Pope, *Essay on Man*, I. 246.  
*The Calendar of Nature.* The reference is to Leigh Hunt's *The Months*, originally published in the *Literary Pocket Book*, 1819-20, and there described as a 'Calendar of the Seasons.'  
 'Bound our brows withal.' Cf. 'To grace thy brows withal,' *Richard III.*, v. 5. 6; and 'Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths,' *Ibid.*, I. I. 5.  
 368. *In April (being at Ilminster).* His April article, he means, written in March. As the reader may have perceived, he did not take the duties of the *London Magazine's* drama too onerously. Having written his second and third articles in the latter part of January (see above, note to p. 343), he was able to leave town for the better part of two months, on a visit to John Hunt, who had retired to his country cottage at Up-Chaddon, near Taunton, and, no doubt, to his parents at Crediton. For the details of his movements in this year (which he spent principally at Winterslow, engaged in the composition of *Table Talk*), see the present editor's *Life*.  
*In June.* That is, in his July article (No. vii.).  
*Miss Tree.* See ante, pp. 289, 330.  
*In August.* In his July article.  
 Note. 'Or mouth,' etc. *Endymion*, II. 405-6. Keats, at the date of this reference, was in Rome, where, in the following February, he died. So far as we know, Hazlitt's latest meeting with him was in the previous March (*Life*, p. 295). It is possible that the rapid decline of his health was unknown to him, or he would have worded this reference a little differently. Cf., however, 'On Effeminacy of Character' (vol. VIII. pp. 254-5); and the critical note in *Select British Poets* (vol. IX. p. 244).  
 'Beautified.' *Hamlet*, II. 2. 110.  
 'Ob Scotland,' etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, II. 2. 431-6. The reference to Lockhart, whose marriage to Scott's daughter Sophia had taken place in April 1820, will not be overlooked.  
 369. *An able article written for us.* No. x., published in the October (not September) number. See above, note to p. 353.  
*The virtue of reliability.* Cf. vol. XVI., note to p. 120.  
*The Lion's Head.* The name given to the editorial paragraphs prefixed to *The London Magazine*. In the number for November, 1820, the editor announced for the next number 'a *chef d'œuvre* of a *Table Talk*—the best yet, we think.' This was No. v. 'On the Pleasure of Painting.'  
 'Was expelled,' etc. Cf. vol. IX. p. 7.  
 'Has not left her peer.' *Lycidas*, 9.  
 'Constrain his genius,' etc. Cf. 'That Love will not submit to be controlled by mastery.' Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, VI. 163-4.  
 'With mighty wings,' etc. *Paradise Lost*, I. 20-22.

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

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370. *Encyclopedia Metropolitana*. The publication of this work began in 1817. Coleridge drew up the scheme, and contributed the 'Preliminary Treatise on Method.'  
 'See merit in the chaos.' *Religio Medici*, Part 1., § 16.  
 'The up-turned eyes,' etc. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 2. 29.  
 Note. Hazlitt refers to *The Fancy: a Selection from the Poetical Remains of the late Peter Corcoran, of Gray's Inn, Student at Law*, a 'jeu d'esprit' by John Hamilton Reynolds, reviewed in *The London Magazine*, July 1820.
371. *Barnaby Rattle*. Founded on Molière's *George Dandin*, and produced at Covent Garden in 1791.  
*Disjecta membra poetæ*. 'Disjecti membra poetæ.' Horace, *Satires*, I. 4-62.  
 'Outlast a thousand storms,' etc. Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*, Act v. Sc. 3.
372. *Paulo majora canamus*. Virgil, *Ecloues*, IV. 1.  
 'The lily drooping,' etc. Cf. 'Than is the lillie upon his stalke greene.' *The Canterbury Tales*, The Knight's Tale, 1036.  
 'The flowers,' etc. Cf. *A Winter's Tale*, IV. 4. 116.  
*As Southey says*. Cf. vol. XI. p. 169.  
 Note. See Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill, II. 409 n.
373. *Macready's Zanga*. Macready first appeared as Zanga in Young's *Revenge* on Oct. 30, 1820.  
 'A wife,' etc. *The Revenge*, Act IV. Sc. 1.  
*Wallace*. By C. E. Walker, November 14, 1820.
374. *The Deaf Lover*. By Frederick Pilon (1750-88), originally produced in 1708 and revived at Covent Garden in 1819.  
 'But in Adam's ear,' etc. *Paradise Lost*, VIII. 1-2.

## ACTORS AND THE PUBLIC

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374. *Bate Dudley*. Sir Henry Bate Dudley (1745-1824), the notorious clergyman and journalist discussed by Johnson and Boswell (*Life*, ed. G. B. Hill, IV. 296). He was for a time editor of *The Morning Post*.
375. 'Fore gad, they were all in a story. Cf. vol. XVII, note to p. 321.  
 A great man 'fall into misfortune.' See *The Beggar's Opera*, Act III.  
 'To tatters,' etc. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 11.  
*Who has praised Sir Walter*, etc. The failure of Constable and of Ballantyne and Co., involving Scott's financial ruin, had occurred in 1826.  
*A vulgar crim. con.* In January 1825, a verdict of £800 was given against Kean in an action, *Cox v. Kean*, for criminal conversation. In consequence of this he was for a time 'hooted from the stage.'  
 'The spells,' etc. Cf. *Otello*, I. 3. 61.
376. *The animals at Exeter-Change*. See vol. X., note to p. 160.  
 'The fiery soul,' etc. Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, 156-8.  
 'The envy,' etc. *Richard II.*, II. 1. 49.  
*Madame Catalani*. Angelica Catalani had retired from the stage in 1827.
377. 'True touch.' 'True as touch,' *Faerie Queene*, I. iii. 2.

## NOTES

### FRENCH PLAYS

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377. *Monsieur Perlet*. Adrien Perlet (1795-1850), a well-known French comedian, who had made his first appearance in 1814.
378. 'Upturned eyes,' etc. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 2. 29.  
*Madame Pasta*. Cf. vol. XII. (*The Plain Speaker*), pp. 324 *et seq.*  
*A friend of ours*. Haydon, of course. See a suppressed passage from *Conversations of Northcote* printed in vol. XX.  
*Sir William Curtis's*. Sir William Curtis (1752-1829), Lord Mayor of London (1795) and for long M.P. for the City.  
'Leave our country and ourselves.' Cf. vol. VIII. p. 189.
379. 'Our Cupid,' etc. Cf. The Earl of Dorset's song, *Dorinda*.
380. *The age of Louis XIV.*, etc. Cf. a passage in vol. X. (*Notes of a Journey*, etc.), p. 150.  
'New manners,' etc. Thomas Warton, Sonnet 'Written in a Blank Leaf of Dugdale's Monasticon.'
381. 'Unmixed with baser matter.' *Hamlet*, I. 5. 104.  
*A certain bappy-spirited writer*. Leigh Hunt, whose recently published *Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries*, Hazlitt had separately written of in 'A Farewell to Essay-Writing' (vol. XVII.) and in 'The Modern Gradus ad Parnassum' (vol. XX.).

### FRENCH PLAYS (*continued*)

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This article in *The Examiner* begins with a long editorial passage written in chaffing spirit and praising the former notice of the French Plays.

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382. 'That soul of pleasure,' etc. Cf. Pope, *Moral Essays*, III. 306.  
l. 17. *Ariste*. This should be Valère.
384. 'To the woods,' etc. Cf. vol. IX. p. 130.

### THE THEATRES AND PASSION-WEEK

Signed 'W. H.' First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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384. 'Because thou art virtuous,' etc. *Twelfth Night*, II. 3. 124.  
'Seizing [tear] their pleasures,' etc. Marvell, *To his Coy Mistress*.
385. *From drivelling Jerdan or from ranting Croly*. See vol. XII, notes to pp. 104, 123.  
' stretched upon the rack,' etc. Cf. *Macbeth*, III. 2. 21-2 and *King Lear*, v. 3. 314-15. A composite quotation, which Hazlitt makes elsewhere.
386. 'All the natural ills,' etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, III. 1. 62.  
'To jest,' etc. *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2. 88.  
'What is set down for them.' *Hamlet*, III. 2. 43.

# DRAMATIC CRITICISM

CHARLES KEAN

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387. *Young Mr. Kean*. Charles John Kean (1811?-68), second son of Edmund Kean. He had made his first appearance at the opening of the Drury Lane season, October 1, 1827.  
*Lovers' Vows*. Mrs. Inchbald's adaptation from Kotzebue (1798).  
*The Marquis of Douro*. Arthur Richard (1807-84), eldest son of the Duke of Wellington, afterwards second Duke.
389. *Mr. Kean's quantum meruit*. Cf. Burke, *A Letter to a Noble Lord* (*Works*, Bohn, v. 114).  
*The Dumb Savoyard*. By Thompson, acted thirty-eight times.  
*Mrs. W. West*. Mrs. W. West (1790-1876), who first appeared (as Miss Cooke) in London in 1812. She married William West in 1815.
390. *Meggy Macgilpin*. Maggy Macgilpin in O'Keefe's *Higbland Reel* (1788).  
*Keeley*. Robert Keeley (1793-1869). His height was five feet two inches.  
*'A man made after supper,' etc.* 2 *Henry IV.*, III. 2. 332.
391. *'Vice to be bated,' etc.* Cf. Pope, *Essay on Man*, II. 217-18.  
*Ecole des Veillards*. By Casimir Delavigne (1823).

## SOME OF THE OLD ACTORS

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392. *'Warbles,' etc.* *L'Allegro*, 134.  
*'Fierce extremes.'* *Paradise Lost*, II. 599.  
*The Invincibles*. A musical farce, acted thirty-four times.  
*'Our mind's eye.'* Cf. *Hamlet*, I. 2. 185.  
*'Our heart's core.'* Cf. *Ibid.*, III. 2. 78.  
*At such a season, for instance, etc.* The reader will turn back and compare this passage with the performers enumerated in the first of Hazlitt's *London Magazine* articles (*ante*, pp. 271-77).  
*'Bony prizer.'* *As You Like It*, II. 3. 8.  
*'Fancy's midwife.'* Cf. *'The fairies' midwife.'* *Romeo and Juliet*, I. 4. 54.
393. *'Gay creatures,' etc.* Comus, 299-301.  
*'Tears such as angels weep,' etc.* *Paradise Lost*, I. 620.  
*Mr. Kean's Othello*. Cf. *ante*, pp. 263, 302.
394. *'With kindest change.'* *Paradise Lost*, v. 336.  
*Russell . . . Dowton*. Cf. *ante*, p. 280, and vol. VI. p. 167.

## THE COMPANY AT THE OPERA

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394. *Mr. Peake*. Richard Brinsley Peake (1792-1847). The farce here noticed is called by Genest *'Little Offerings.'*
395. *'Crabbed age,' etc.* *The Passionate Pilgrim*, Stanza XII.  
*Miss Goward*. Mary Ann Goward (1805?-99), who afterwards became so well known as Mrs. Keeley. She married Keeley in 1829.

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395. *Madame Caradori*. Madame Caradori-Allan (1800-65), who made her début at the Italian Opera in London in 1822.  
*Mademoiselle Sontag*. Henriette Sontag (1806-54). She married Count Rossi in 1828 and retired from the stage till near the end of her life.
397. *That little Brocard*. Suzanne Brocard (1798-1855), whose first appearance at the Comédie Française was in 1817 and who retired in 1839. See vol. xi. p. 269 and note.
398. *Lord Byron and his Contemporaries*. Cf. *ante*, note to p. 381.  
*'The mob,' etc.* Pope, *Imitations of Horace*, Book II. Ep. 1. 108.  
*Inscribed in the Red Book*. See vol. ix., note to p. 118.  
*The Great Tun of Heidelberg*. In the cellars of the Castle, said to be once capable of containing 50,000 gallons of wine.  
*The bottle-conjuror*. A well-established form of legerdemain. Cf. 'Bottle-conjurors, and persons who will jump down their own throats' (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1755, quoted in *N.E.D.*).

## THE BEGGAR'S OPERA

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399. '*Vanity, chaotic vanity.*' Unidentified.  
*'Waste her sweetness,' etc.* Cf. Gray's *Elegy*, 56.  
*'Splenetic [splenitive] and rash.'* *Hamlet*, v. 1. 284.  
*'And when the date,' etc.* Butler, *Hudibras*, Part 1. Canto 1. 285-6.
400. *De Vere*. By Robert Plumer Ward (1765-1846), published in 1827. It was supposed by some, though denied by the author, that De Vere was intended to represent Canning.  
*'With hollow and rueful rumble.'*  
*'We have heard,' etc.* 2 *Henry IV.*, III. 2. 228.  
*Sir John Sylvester*. Sir John Silvester (1745-1822), Recorder of London.  
*As Mr. Hobbes calls it.* *Leviathan*, Part 1. Chap. 3.  
*A Race for Dinner*. By G. H. B. Rodwell (1800-52).  
*'And Birnam-wood,' etc.* *Macbeth*, iv. 1. 93, etc.  
*The Poor Gentleman*. By George Colman the Younger (1801).
401. '*Eyes of youth.*' Cf. vol. xvi. p. 400.  
*'To advantage dressed.'* Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 297.  
*Miss Ellen Tree*. Ellen Tree (1805-80), who married Charles Kean in 1842. She was a younger sister of Mrs. Bradshaw (*ante*, p. 289, note), the actress and singer.
402. *Miss Love*. Emma Love, afterwards Mrs. Calcroft, had made her first appearance on the stage in 1817 at the English Opera House.

## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW AND L'AVARE

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403. '*The lungs of others,' etc.* Cf. *As You Like It*, II. 7. 30.  
*Mr. Wilkie failed, etc.* See *ante*, p. 99.
404. '*Warble, warble.*' Cf. *As You Like It*, II. 5. 38.  
*Mademoiselle Mars plays the part of Katharine*. See *Notes of a Journey* (vol. ix. p. 151).

## DRAMATIC CRITICISM

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405. *Ninette à la cour*. By Charles Simon Favart (1710-92).  
 406. *The Seraglio*. An opera by Dimond, produced in 1827.  
*Charles the Second*. By Howard Payne, produced in 1824.

### MRS. SIDDONS

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406. *Pie Voleuse*. See *ante*, note to p. 219.  
 'Born to converse,' etc. Cf. Pope, *Prologue to the Satires*, 196.  
 407. *The Fall of Nineveh*. By John Martin (1789-1854). The painting was exhibited in Bond Street in April and May, 1828.  
*Abridged Paradise Lost*. See vol. ix, note to p. 180.  
*A triumphant peroration*. The reference of course, is to Scott's *Life of Napoleon*, published in 1827.  
 'The worst, the second fall of man.' Cf. William Windham, *Speeches*, II. 47 (Nov. 4, 1801).  
 409. 'Barren spectators.' *Hamlet*, III. 2. 46.  
*Mr. Stanfield's landscape backgrounds*. William Clarkson Stanfield (1793-1867).  
 410. *Veluti in speculum*. Cf. 'Inspecere tamquam in speculum in vitas omnium,' etc. Terence, *Adelphi*, Act III. Sc. 3.

### THE THREE QUARTERS, Etc.

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410. *The new comedy*. *Ups and Downs, or the Ladder of Life* was the title of the piece here noticed. It was acted eight times.  
*The secretary of the Admiralty*. Croker. The allusion is to his remarks of March 28, 1825: 'The Dulwich collection . . . was quite as distant as Russell Square, though he did not profess to know exactly where Russell Square was.' See *Hansard*, New Series, XI. 1266; and cf. 'The Dandy School' in vol. xx.  
*A nice distinction in Miss Burney*. See her *Cecilia*.  
 411. *Killing no Murder*. A farce by Theodore Hook, produced in 1809.  
 'Like dew-drops [a dewdrop], etc. *Troilus and Cressida*, III. 3. 224.  
 'Fine by degrees,' etc. Prior, *Henry and Emma*, 430.  
*The little bookselling Buonaparte*. Hazlitt's pleasing description of his own publisher, with whom he seems to have maintained amicable relations for nearly ten years.  
 412. 'They best can paint them,' etc. Pope, *Eloisa to Abelard*, 366.  
*Lord Porchester's tragedy*. *Don Pedro, King of Castile*, by Lord Porchester, afterwards 3rd Earl of Carnarvon (1800-49), was produced at Drury Lane on March 10, 1828.  
*Lord Morpeth's*. Lord Morpeth, afterwards 7th Earl of Carlisle (1802-64), published in 1828 *The Last of the Greeks; or the Fall of Constantinople*, a tragedy in verse.  
*Mr. Moore . . . will try his hand*. Moore's *M.P. or The Bluestocking*, was produced in 1811.  
*The Sphynx, etc.* *The Sphynx*, a weekly, ran from July 8, 1827, to April 25, 1829. *The Athenæum* was started in January 1828. *The Argus* a daily

## NOTES

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- paper, ran from June 30 to July 26, 1828. Hazlitt seems to have had certain passages with 'the Editor of editors, J. S. Buckingham, Esq.,' and to have sent him a contribution for *The Sphynx* (printed in vol. xx.) for which he was not paid. Cf. the present editor's *Life*, pp. 397-9, and Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *The Hazlitts*, i. 487.
412. *A certain Duke*. Wellington is intended.  
*The glass-door in Burlington street*. 8, New Burlington Street, the publishing office of Henry Colburn, whence the *New Monthly Magazine* was issued, under the editorship of Thomas Campbell. 'Mr. O. —' I do not identify.  
*'Oh! dearest Ophelia,' etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, II. 2. 120.
413. *'He knows his cue,' etc.* Cf. *Othello*, I. 2. 83.

### MR. KEAN

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414. *We do not wonder, etc.* Kean had played Richard III. at the Théâtre Français in May 1828.  
*Voltaire has borrowed.* Cf. 'Parallel Passages in Various Poets,' in vol. xx.
415. *'The poet's eye,' etc.* *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. 1. 12.  
*'Should be as a book,' etc.* *Macbeth*, I. 5. 63.  
*The assassination of the Duke of Berri*. Charles Ferdinand, Duc de Berri, second son of the Count of Artois, afterwards Charles X, was assassinated by a fanatic in February 1820.
416. *The Hetman Platoff*. The Russian general, Matvei Ivanovich Platoff (1757-1818), Hetman of the Cossacks of the Don. Cf. vol. iv., note to p. 151.  
*'Give us pause.'* *Hamlet*, III. 1. 68.  
*Miss Smithson*. Harriet Constance Smithson (1800-54), played frequently in France and married Hector Berlioz in 1833.  
*We were heartily glad to find, etc.* A natural inference from this passage (and, indeed, from the whole article) would be that it was written in Paris, on Hazlitt's arrival there for his work on the concluding volumes of *The Life of Napoleon* (cf. vol. XIII., introductory note). If so, the paragraph with which the article concludes (omitted in the text) would not be his, as it refers to a letter from a correspondent regarding the size of ladies' headgear in the London theatres and the forthcoming first appearance of Mlle. Bartolozzi (sister of Mme. Vestris) at the opening of the Haymarket on June 17.

